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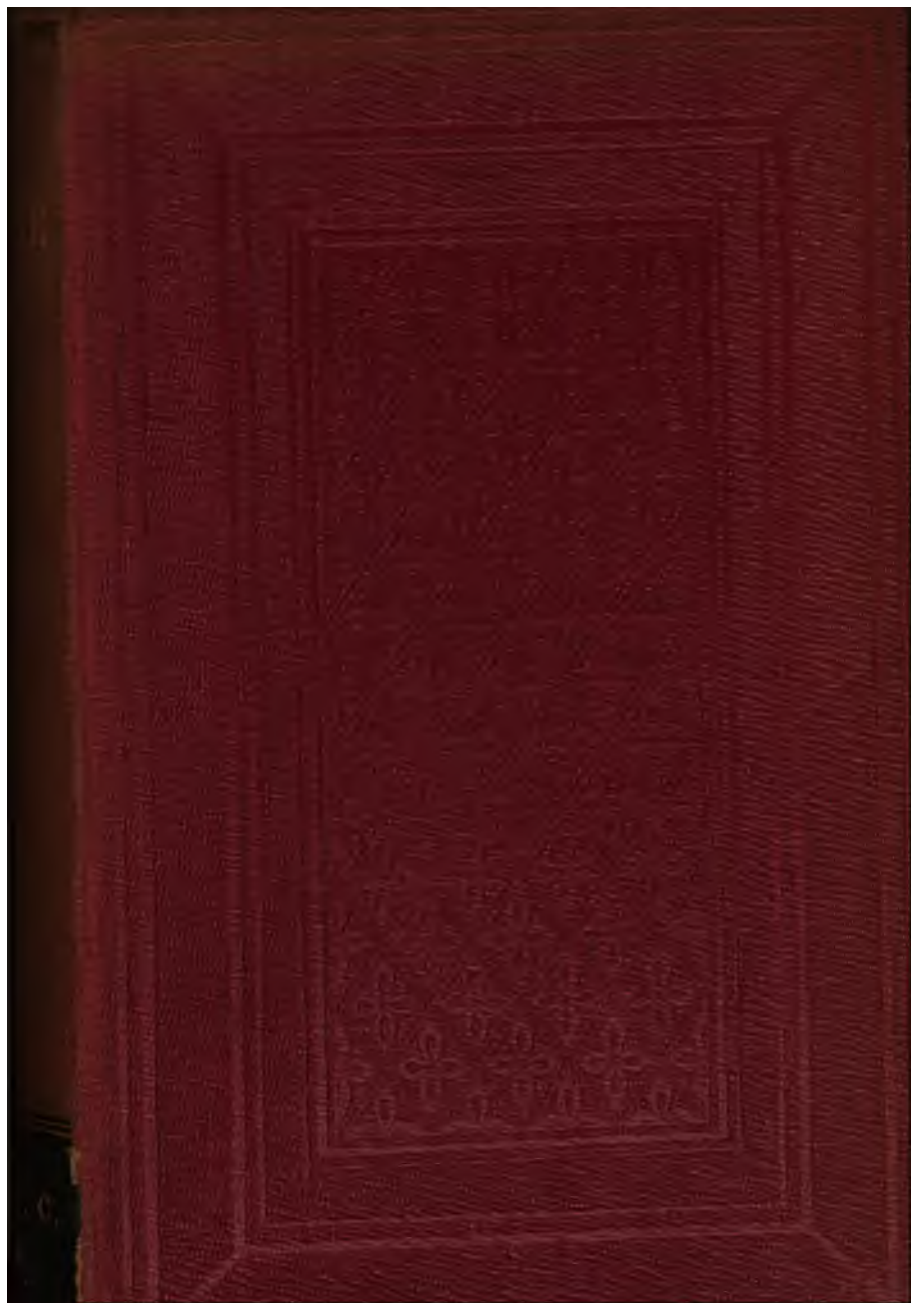
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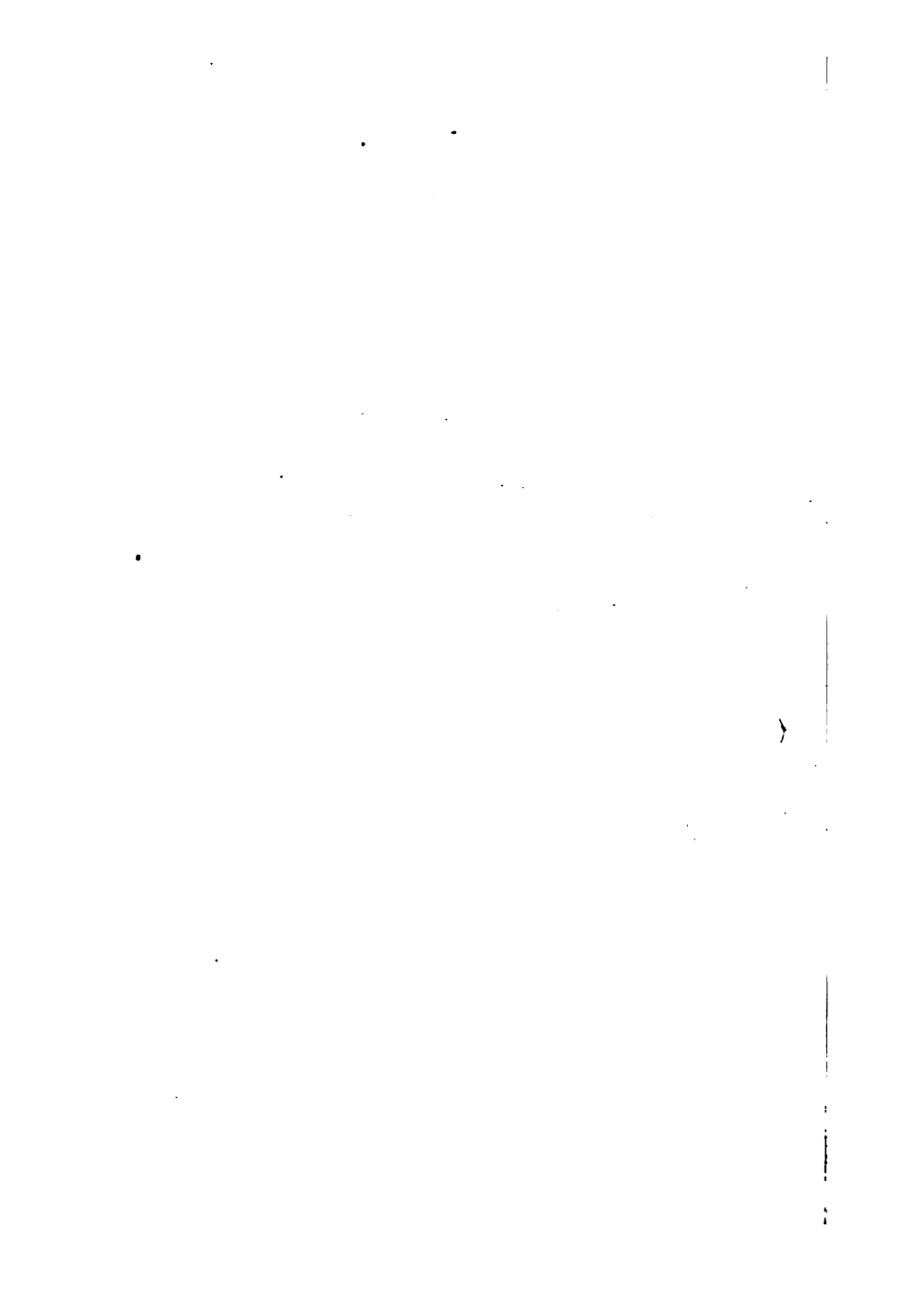


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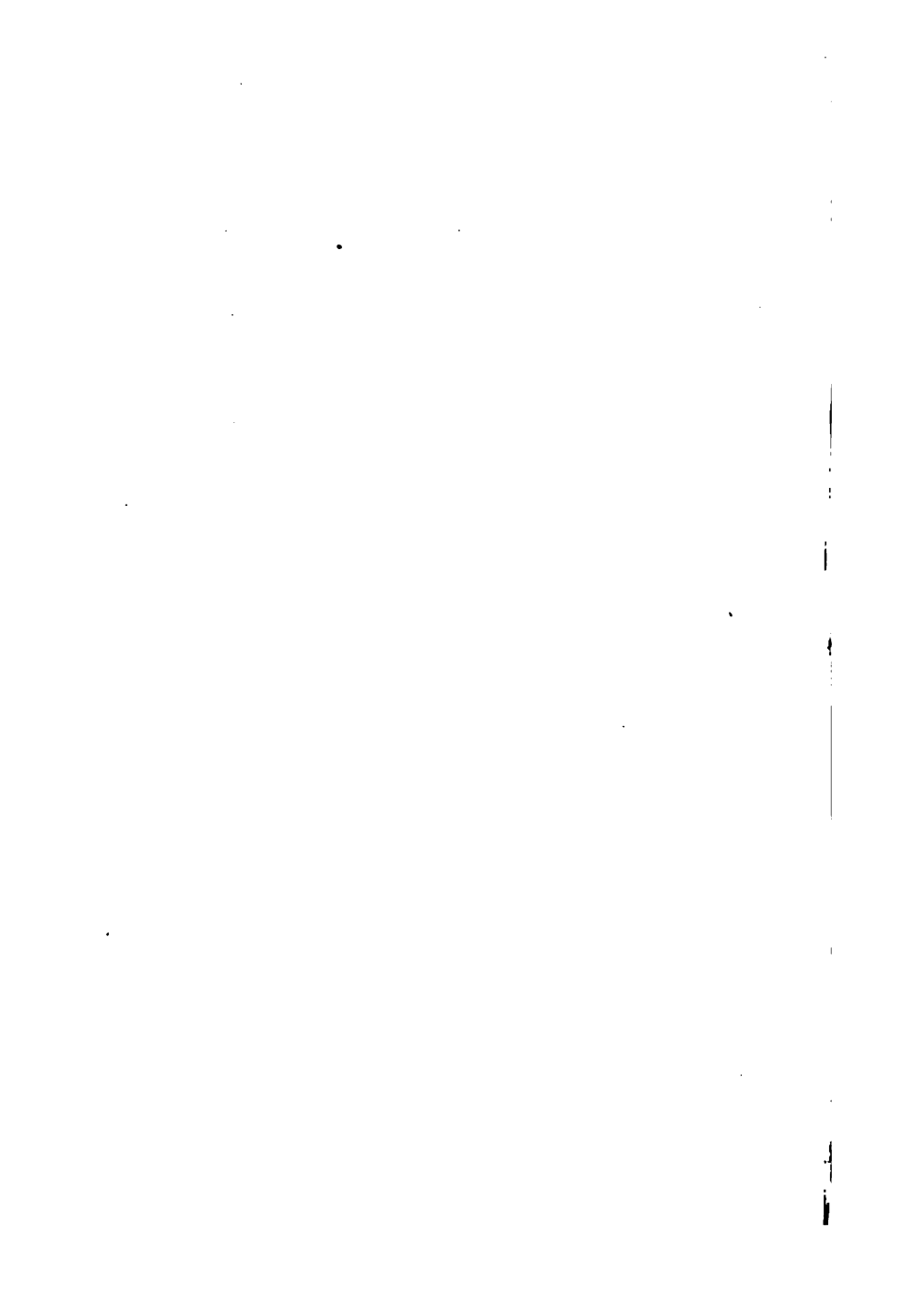
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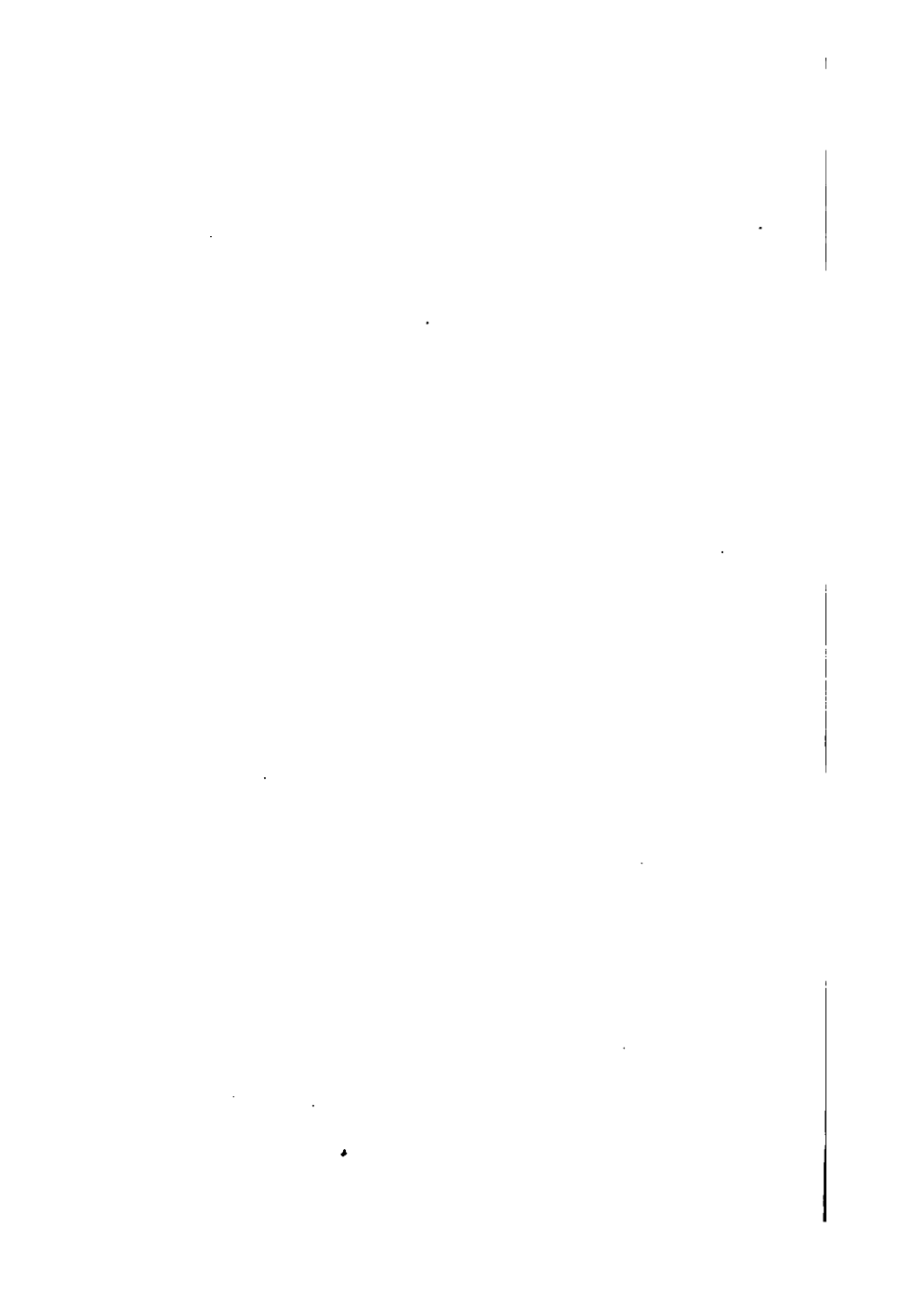




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THE SQUIRE

BRIGHTON
ROBERT FOLTHORP, 173 NORTH STREET

THE SQUIRE

A Biographical Sketch



"De mortuis nil nisi vanitas"

Brighton

ROBERT FOLTHORP, 173 NORTH STREET

AND SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS

1861



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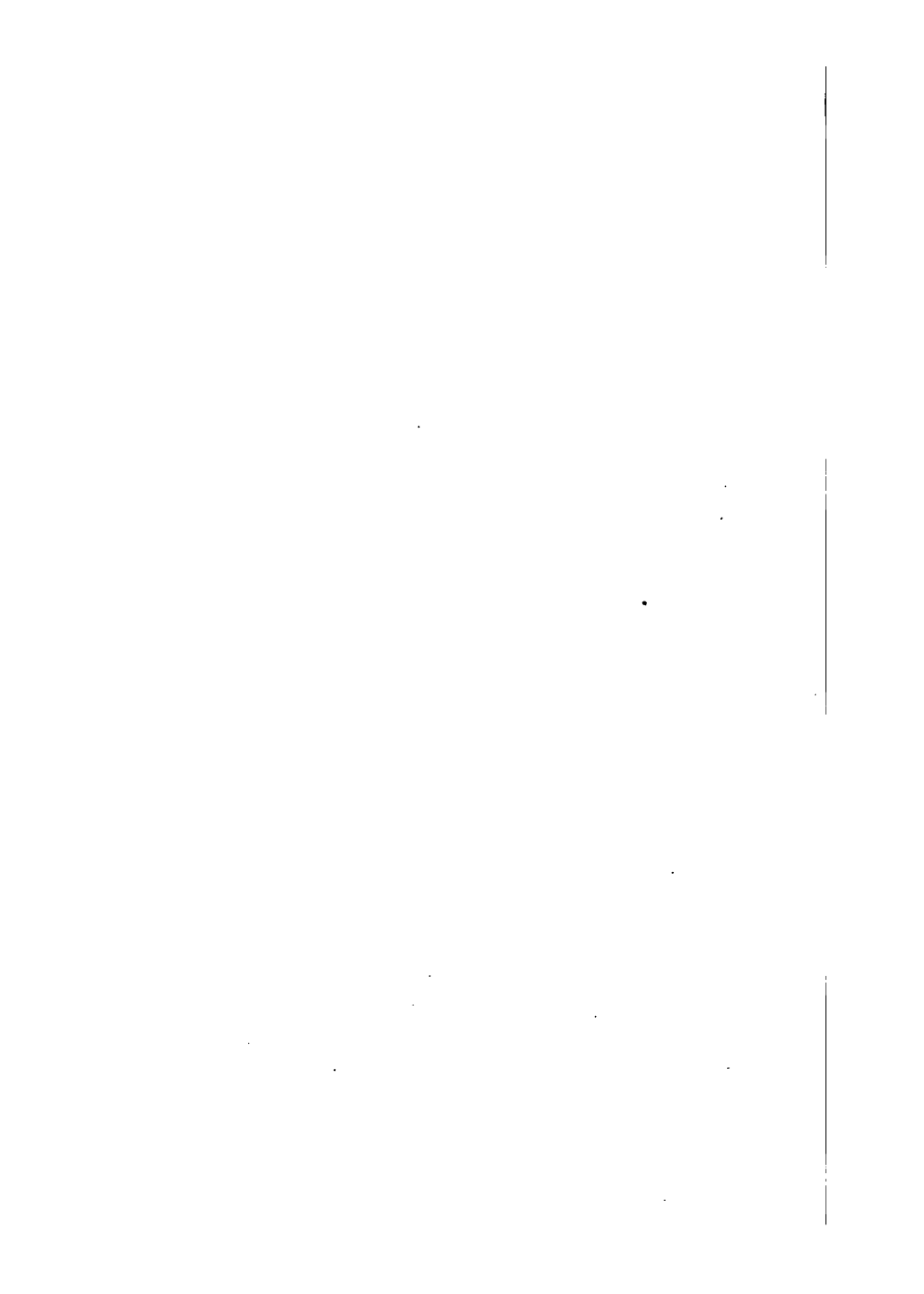
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v.—How he was to be
Rector of the Parish is
passing Glimpse of his

Easy, Esq., of Cock-a-
Parish of Rooksnest, in the
could not be considered
notwithstanding he had been
the years, I shall not trouble
biographical sketch of him, with
his birth, parentage, &c., but jump
to the middle of my subject.
en years, more or less, after the com-
ent of the present century, I, then being

B

a stripling of ten years of age, and domiciled since the decease of my last surviving parent at Cock-a-Roost Hall, was sitting with my uncle (I call him so for short, for he was, in fact, my great-uncle) in his study, when the footman put into his hand a letter of more than ordinary dimensions, and sealed with a large seal.

He sat silent, with the letter in his hand, for a full minute after he had read it; then, speaking to himself, "Master of the Buckhounds! master of a pack of dogs! This, then, is the important office I am offered in the new Ministry."

Then, dividing the letter very methodically into so many equal parts, and twisting them up into so many paper-lights, he rang the bell, ordered his *écume-de-mer* pipe (which was cleaned out every night in readiness for the morning), and after he had charged it with Turkish tobacco, set it alight with one of the papers he had twisted up, and smoked with his usual tranquillity for an hour.

I never heard a word more from him on the subject. It was one which at that time I was

unable to understand, but am now able to explain the matter. He had supported his party while in opposition for some years, after his own independent fashion, — not all through thick and thin, like a good party man, — when, taking disgust at some of their glowing inconsistencies, he had one night delivered a sweeping and bitterly sarcastic philippic against their whole policy, had then suddenly strode over the benches, gone home, and wisely retired to bed, instead of staying up till daylight to listen to their wrathful recriminations.

A month after this ill-timed speech, his party had taken their turn on the ladder, and had now offered the Buckhounds to a man of sixty-five, who had seldom bestrode a quadruped since the day when he was kicked off a donkey at school, by reason of which kick in the air, his nose, from the violence with which he saluted the ground, had remained a little awry ever since.

This inappropriate place was offered to him, it might be, in a malicious spirit; but the malice failed of its effect. Thomas Easy thought no more of it after the fifth or sixth

whiff of his pipe, for he possessed an equanimity in most things in this life, which, according to my idea of the true character of a philosopher, proved him a truer philosopher than if he had squared the circle, or discovered perpetual motion.

This sickened my uncle of politics, I believe, for he accepted the Chiltern Hundreds soon after. He had other resources in his own mind than attending debates; although not a bookish man, he could employ a leisure hour or two over Corneille, Racine, and Molière, Dante or Ariosto, and the Don Quixote of Cervantes, being not only tolerably conversant with French, Italian, and Spanish literature, but having spoken these languages during his grand tour on the Continent, as it was then called, before the age of railroad travellers. And he had acquired by his intercourse with foreigners an ease of manner and a *bonhomie* which made him a citizen of the world, so a very sociable companion to people in general, even at the first introduction.

He had just finished his pipe when the

servant announced Dr. Baillie, the rector of the parish. Now this reverend gentleman was not a man after my uncle's own heart, for with all his *bonhomie*, he had his dislikings.

In stepped a rather short and corpulent man, of about forty, one evidently, from his dress and rather pretentious manner, and sleek countenance, a man well to do in the world. His air was stiff and ceremoniously polite, his tone, though bland, was confident and authoritative; his eyes were small, grey, and twinkling; his complexion was of a ruddy purple; his mouth very wide.

He lived in a good parsonage house, which he had enlarged for his own convenience, with what benefit to his successor, who might not enjoy so long a purse (for he had inherited 1000*l.* a year from his father, an ironmonger), it may be doubted.

The doctor had crammed himself, while at Oxford, with just enough of Greek, logic, and theology to enable him to obtain his degree, and the lucre of a fellowship, and had never after troubled himself with those studies. He had

not written an inspired treatise, prophesying the year when the millennium was to take place, or the great war of Armageddon. He had sufficient theology, however, to compose a sermon that would make an unlearned congregation drowsy, after the fashion of some of his brother dons at Oxford, with whom he was held in high esteem for the orthodox cookery of his dinners. Not so by my uncle, who was no epicure, and who said he never knew what he was eating at the doctor's table.

My uncle shut his ears to his theology, and frequently absented himself from the morning service when the doctor preached, but invariably attended that in the evening, when Mr. Allworth, the curate, spoke the gospel intelligibly to the poor and humble congregation that then attended;—genteel people at that time never attended evening service.

The doctor was now closeted with him, and my uncle wished him anywhere else, for his conversation pleased him as little as his sermons; so he forced himself to put the best face on the matter, and returned his guest's

unmeaning compliments with good breeding and politeness, till the doctor, pulling a paper from his pocket, presented it to him, and in his bland manner said, "He hoped Mr. Easy would sign a petition in favour of Catholic Emancipation."

"No," replied my uncle, "that I will not," in so loud and firm a tone that it shook the poor doctor's nervous system from top to bottom, so that the paper dropped from his hands. Now as his arms were very short, and considerably in the rear of his stomach, which protruded itself very inconveniently for a stooping posture, he made several vain and awkward attempts to pick it up from the ground; and there he stood helplessly eyeing it, until, seeing his embarrassment, I picked it up myself and presented it to him. He snatched it from me with an angry scowl on his brow, and crammed it again into his coat pocket; and after a few more trivial remarks upon things in general, called for his carriage to convey him half a mile to his parsonage, and took his leave.

At the time I am speaking of, the Catholic

Emancipation had become a Cabinet question, and bishops who had mitres on their heads, and still other mitres in their heads, which they aspired to be translated to, began to make a compromise between their principles and interests. The doctor, too, had plainly something in his head, for, until this question had been taken up by those in power, he had been in the habit of often thundering against the Catholics in so loud a tone as much annoyed the poor rustics, who came to enjoy a Sabbath rest, and to be lulled into a nap by one of his usual discourses, in the style of those conventional ones preached at our cathedrals.

“Pray, Sir,” said I, after the doctor had taken his leave, not understanding the terms I employed, looking up into his face with all the innocence and simplicity of a veritable Simon Pure, — “Pray, Sir, is Dr. Baillie high church or low church?”

My uncle burst out into an uncontrollable fit of laughter, that made my face and ears tingle again. Seeing my confusion, kind soul as he was, he tried again and again to restrain

his mirth, but the more he tried, the more provokingly it streamed forth through his eyes, through his nostrils, puckering his cheeks, and convulsing his whole frame. When the fit at last was over, he said, patting my head affectionately.

“Go, Bobby, into the drawing-room, and ask the women.”

CHAP. II.

A little Digression about my own little Self while at School.
— Some Account of a Private School fifty years back.—
Walk with my Uncle to Shrewsbury.—The Landlord of
the Black Swan there, and his Politics.

Now the women, to whom I had been referred, were the two daughters of my great uncle, whom I used to call my aunts. The eldest, Tabitha, who owned to thirty, was only ten years more, and in person was tall and spare, like her father, — but there all likeness between them ended. Instead of his black lustrous eyes, hers were small, of the colour of yellow gooseberries, deeply imbedded in their sockets, and peered into your face with a most inquisitive glance. She had black dark hair, a low forehead, and a short nose that seemed to turn itself up at every body. She was a great talker, had a harsh cracked voice, and always found somebody to tattle about, not very

charitably. Tabitha managed the household affairs, and very economically ; a joint of meat served for hash and stew for two days, after its first appearance at table.

Her younger sister, Maria, was really no more than thirty, with mild blue eyes, a pleasing voice, played the harp not merely from notes, but from the inspiration of her own musical soul, and was an accomplished and amiable gentlewoman in all respects.

As my uncle was a widower, I refer those who wish to learn what Mrs. Easy was, to her epitaph on the marble slab of her last resting-place in Rooksnest church.

“ Why what, in the name of wonder,” cried Tabitha, when I entered the drawing-room, “ has scared the child ? Have you seen a ghost, Mister Bob ? ”

“ Not as I know of,” I replied.

“ Then what have you seen ? ”

“ Nothing but Dr. Baillie.”

“ Nothing but that dear edifying man ! where ? ”

“ In Uncle’s study.”

Out flew Tabitha, exclaiming, "The dear man!"

"Now, Bobby," said my aunt Maria, "come and sit you by my side, and tell me how you like school."

I had been sent by my late father to Dr. Hornet's at Chiswick, and had just returned for the holidays, shy and awkward at first, as I always felt on finding myself in a carpeted room and in genteel company, after the sanded floor of a school-room, and the society of such boys as were sent to Dr. Hornet's academy: but the kind manner of my aunt Maria soon set me at my ease, and in a few minutes I began to grow exceedingly communicative.

"Now how do you like school?"

"I don't like it at all."

"Well, and how do they treat you?"

"Why, at breakfast, Billy Berks serves us out of a large tray,—hot buttered rolls, and sky-blue, as the boys call it, from a large pewter jug: and for dinner, they serve tough leg of mutton, swipes to drink, and a slice of sour rice-pudding." And here I began to cry at

the remembrance of my hard fare, which had so ill agreed with my youthful stomach, as to entail the apothecary's bill on my quarter's account.

When I had wiped my eyes, "I wish, aunt Maria," I began, "that I had sixpence a week allowance, instead of twopence, and then I could lay up a stock of gingerbread, as them 'ere ants do in the fable, for the week."

"'Them 'ere!' why Bobby, does Dr. Hornet teach you grammar?"

"Yes; 'As in presenti,' and 'Quid genus.' That's Latin grammar, I suppose?"

"Well, but you had one good dinner at Chiswick last quarter?"

"Not as I remember."

"Why, didn't the Doctor ask you to partake of the three brace of partridges we sent him?"

"No; he eat 'em all himself, and told me to write home, and say he was obliged to uncle for them, and liked them very much."

"Then," said my aunt, "I'll take care he shall have no more partridges."

My aunt observing me constantly scratching my head, asked what was the matter with it,

suspecting, I believe, that I had imported some live stock from Chiswick.

“Why, we’ve all got the scurvy,” said I, “at school, and it makes my head itch ; the maid rubs our heads with summut for it three times a week, and gives us a pewter mug of bran tea each.”

“Mercy on me,” exclaimed my aunt, “what a school !”

I believe that this was about an average specimen of the private schools of that generation. There was a melancholy playground, walled around; our jackets were mostly out at elbows, and our hats with the crown half fallen in. We had plum-pudding only on Sundays, and only then we were taken out an airing to Turnham Green, or on the banks of the Thames. The situation was low and damp, and the air was perfumed by the balmy odours of fields of onions, which there seemed to be the favourite objects of cultivation.

After this little digression on my little self, I return to my uncle. An hour after Dr. Baillie had left, I went in with him to a cold lunch—for two hot dinners a day, as is now the custom,

he considered not suitable to those who were exempted from hard labour; for even hard working folks, he said, had seldom even cold meat once a day. After lunch I set out with my uncle on a walk to Shrewsbury, which was reached by short cuts through meadows and corn-fields in about three miles.

It was a much frequented path, and many were the bows and greetings which my uncle received from the country folks, to whom he had always something to say, and who always made a point of saying something to the squire. To the children, in particular, he had always something kind to say—for he delighted in them; and though he seldom quoted Scripture, he would often repeat, ‘Of such is the kingdom of heaven.’ Now Dr. Baillie, be it observed, who once a month preached to the younger portion of the congregation, calling them, “My dear children,” yet in fact addressed them as if they were the most hardened and inveterate sinners of all his flock.

We were now ascending the steep eminence on which the ancient and beautiful town of

Shrewsbury displays its castle, and the lofty spires of its noble churches. It is still encircled, as in feudal times, by walls running entirely round it. Its unequalled public walks expand below, bordered by the Severn.

We had climbed but a few steps up the hill, when we heard the grating of the locked wheel of the mail coach against the gravel, and the clattering hoofs of the four blood cattle that bore it along; and at the next step, down it came, amidst the blasts of the guard's horn, and the shrill *hoorahs* of the urchins, who lined the hill every day at three o'clock to enjoy the spectacle, — a thing that is past, but which is still often present to my mind.

“There it sweeps along, at twelve miles an hour while it is going!” exultingly exclaimed my uncle; and what travelling in the world can equal it but that of the *malle poste*, on the 400 miles between Paris and Bordeaux?

Having reached the castle of Shrewsbury, my uncle, after crossing the threshold of the Black Swan, went straight into the bar.

“Now the Lord bless you, Squire Easy,” said

the jolly host, stretching out his fist to him, "right glad I am, squire, to see you ; and what shall we offer you and the young gentleman — round of beef, game pie, or perhaps you'll prefer a chop after your walk ?"

"Nothing to eat, thank you," answered my uncle, who perhaps was making an invidious comparison between Boniface's larder and his own, not at all complimentary to his daughter Tabitha.

"A tankard of the October, then, squire, for you must be dry, if not hungry after your walk. A tankard here," he said to his bustling partner, "for the squire ; and now for the young gentleman ; what shall it be, my young Sir ?"

"Anything, please you, Sir, as long as it ain't swipes, or sour rice-pudding."

The landlord looked scrutinisingly into my face, and being from experience a very keen observer of mankind, saw at one glance that I looked too simple to mean any affront, and immediately began to chuckle at my simplicity.

"Ho ho ! my young master, I see, I see ; you're thinking of Dr. Birch's fare at school.

Here, bring the young squire, Margery, a Shrewsbury cake and a bottle of the best currant. Ho ho! ho ho!" and he shook his fat sides with laughter, chuckling out, "Swipes and sour rice-pudding! Excuse me, I hope no offence, squire," he said to my uncle.

"A Shrewsbury cake," I said to the landlord; "why, we give a penny apiece for them at Chiswick School."

"Oh! Dr. Birch lives at Chiswick, does he? well, we sha'n't charge you nothing for the cake, my young master, and so you are welcome to a dozen, if so be that you can eat 'em."

In came the tankard, currant wine, and the cake.

"And now," said the landlord to my uncle, "what's your sentiments, squire, about this new Ministry, as talks of 'mancipating the Catholics? 'Now, sure,' said I to your parson, who came here to get me to sign my name to a petition for 'em, 'you ain't sure,' says I, 'agoing to let the Pope, the priests, and the devil loose upon us?'"

"Well, I wash my hands of it altogether,"

said my uncle, "and so I told Dr. Baillie, who came to me, petition in hand, for those whom he had been preaching against."

"And right glad I am to hear your honour say so," said the landlord, seizing my uncle's hand and griping it. He took hold of the tankard, which his wife had brought in to him as well as to my uncle, knowing, though not expressly ordered, it was tacitly implied, and putting it to his lips, gave as a toast, "Confusion to the Pope, the devil, and the priests," and never put it down till he had seen the bottom of it. Then turning to me he said, "Now, young gentleman," filling me up a bumper of the currant,—“Confusion to the Pope, the devil, and the priests.”

"I can't remember all that at once," replied I, "but I'll drink this to the Pope, and the next glass to the devil, and the next to the priests."

"By goles," cried the landlord, slapping his thigh; "thou art a 'cutter lad than I took thee for at first, and will do justice, I'll be sworn, to thy schooling. Another tankard for the squire," shouted the landlord to his wife.

My uncle excused himself; but the landlady brought one nevertheless, and after presenting it to my uncle, handed it to her husband.

"Now, squire," he said, taking a draught of it, "folks talk of an election."

"I think that is possible."

"And a good thing for the country, Squire. There'll be twenty days open house for me. Nothing like an election to open people's hearts and purses."

"I'm sure, John," exclaimed his wife, "I do hope there'll be no such a thing. 'Tis all mighty well for you, John, who keep boozing here at the bar, and never think of me all the while, who am slaving below in the kitchen."

Fortunately at this moment, when an altercation seemed to be on the eve between man and wife, the cracking of postillion's whips was heard, and a coroneted coach with four posters drove up to the door. Saying, "Excuse me, squire," out waddled the landlord as fast as he could on his gouty and unsteady legs, and his wife after him. Two waiters, the head chambermaid, and boots in his shirt sleeves were

already scraping and bowing before the contents of the coroneted carriage.

So abrupt and unceremonious had been the exit of the host and hostess of the Black Swan, that my uncle, rather piqued, exclaimed :

“ Like to fashionable hosts,
They take their parting guest by the hand,
And welcome in the comer.”

“ Come along, Bobby ;” and we began to walk home at a pace which kept me on a jog-trot the whole way, as my uncle strided along in his seven-leagued boots. I believe he was on his road from Grenada to Madrid, for he was absorbed in some fancy of his own, or in the *malle poste* to Bordeaux, or scouring across the Pontine marshes. Or perhaps he was at Palermo, or at Catania, or at Jerusalem, or on his way to Jericho beyond Jordan.

CHAP. III.

A few Words on my Uncle's Talent as a Conversationist. —

Dr. Baillie is asked to Dinner.—How he dined.—My Aunt Tabitha's Skill in Cookery.

MY uncle's anecdotes about his grand tour seemed to be inexhaustible; and in truth were so, for he told them over and over again. Though never weary of his favourite subject himself, he did not weary others with it. He had enough discernment to read in a man's countenance when he began to bore him, and discreetly pulled up in time. As at that time country gentlemen, innocent of French and Italian, were not in the habit of displaying their Christmas hospitality at Paris or at Rome, and travelling abroad was not then vulgarised by railroads, the tales of travellers were in general more acceptable than they are now.

The value of these his anecdotes, it must be confessed, consisted not in their matter, but in

the manner in which he related them. The manner was easy, graceful, and without a shadow of pretension; his countenance beaming with benevolence, and with the soul of sociality. At all times he won the hearts of those who came to chat with him, because he listened with an interest to what they had to say, and sent them always away more contented with themselves. Among the young, there was no one younger than himself, though he was at the age of sixty, such was his spirit and vivacity.

On my return home I had so thoroughly digested my Shrewsbury cake, that I began to think what a little fool I was in not asking the landlord for the dozen cakes which he had welcomed me to, and my uncle observing that I looked quite faint, asked me if I was tired.

“I am very hungry,” said I.

“Poor Bobby, then you shall sit down to dinner with us.”

Now it so chanced that aunt, when she ran out of the room in quest of the edifying Doctor, finding that he had gone home, had put on her shawl, walked to the parsonage, and had invited

him to-day to dinner : and she thought a child like me indeed not fit to sit down in such reverend company. She said, however, that I should be put at a side table. But my uncle insisted I should sit next him.

Tabby, in the meanwhile, had been anxiously busy in preparing choice and most curious delicacies for the doctor, which I shall particularise in due time, as a general sample of her *state* dinners.

Dinner having been served on table at five o'clock, Tabitha began to do the honours.

“ May I help you, Dr. Baillie, to some crab soup ? ”

“ Thank you, Miss Easy.”

The Doctor handled his spoon very cautiously at first, but on the whole got politely through the contents of his plate.

“ Papa, help Dr. Baillie to one of those lamperns.”

“ The greatest delicacy that the Severn affords,” said the Doctor, his mouth watering at the name of them.

But Tab's lamperns were eels, and those of

a very muddy flavour, as he discovered at the first mouthful.

As to my uncle, he could scarce cough down a laugh when Tab talked of such expensive delicacies as lamperns. He tried, however, to console the disappointed Doctor with a glass of excellent Madeira, Tabitha fortunately having nothing to do with the cellar.

The second course being now served up, "Samuel," said Tabitha, "hand round the oily podridy patties to Dr. Baillie (she had heard her father often commend the Spanish *olla podrida*); but the Reverend now beginning to smell a rat in the dishes puffed off by his hostess, and staggered perhaps by the name by which the patties had been christened, would have none of them, luckily for his palate, for they had been concocted of the odds and ends of the last week's dinners.

I proceed now to particularise the second course, as the dishes composing it had been named by my elder aunt. At the top of the table was a hashed calf's head, seasoned with stewed prunes; at the bottom, the only safe

and reliable dish on table, a saddle of mutton; at the four corners there was a calf's heart, larded bubble and squeak, liver and crow, something very black and greasy,—I suspect it was black pudding. Tabitha had named it a *Diable à la Marengo*. Indeed, all those dishes bore foreign names to disguise them, some French, some Italian names, such as my aunt had contrived to pick up from books on cookery.

“Doctor, allow me to help you,” she said, “to this dish before me, *cervelle fritte* (the Italian name for fried brains). In an evil hour for his stomach, the Doctor, out of mere courtesy, consented, which immediately began to rebel against the mixture. After a few vain attempts, he was forced to put down his knife and fork, and my kind uncle, perceiving his distress, ordered Samuel to remove his plate, and said, “Now Doctor, let me offer you a slice of this five-year old mutton;” and such the Doctor found it to be, and indemnified himself by being helped three times of it, for his previous mortifications.

“ I see,” said my uncle, “ that you have a true English appetite, and have no fancy for foreign-made dishes.”

It was in vain that after this Tabitha offered him any more of her truly diabolical delicacies ; he had made an excellent dinner, he said, considering a fit of indigestion under which he had been labouring for the last two days.

Tabitha caught up the word indigestion. “ Oh, Doctor ! ” she exclaimed, “ I have an excellent remedy for it, and you shall take home to-night with you a bottle of my mixture, for I have always a stock in hand.”

In truth, it was doubtful whether she excelled most in the art of medicine or cookery, but certain it is that both were nearly equally nauseous under her hands. She was very charitable, both of one and the other, to the whole parish. To have seen her, as I have sometimes, cooking up a cauldron of broth for the poor, would remind any one of Hecate presiding over *her* cauldron, in the scene of the witches in Macbeth. Though my uncle had committed a fatal error in entrusting the management of his

table to her, he interfered nevertheless so far as to order a joint every day. As to the servants, observing they looked very pale and thin, he had kindly put them on board wages ; and when he gave one of his own state dinners to a party of fourteen or sixteen, he used to procure the services of the host of the Black Swan, who had learned the art of cookery in a nobleman's family before he had taken the inn at Shrewsbury. I cannot see how he could have done more in a matter which generally sits very awkwardly on a gentleman's shoulders.

CHAP. IV.

Dr. Baillie again. — His Courtship of my younger Aunt ends in his marrying my elder.

As the rector, at the time which I speak of, was considered as the great man of the parish *after* the squire, I shall give due importance to Dr. Baillie, whom we have seen regaled in the preceding chapter, by bringing him again on the carpet.

He was a bachelor, and a thorough Oxford don in his habits and accomplishments, who lived with a maiden aunt, who was in fact his housekeeper. She was a good cook, but I believe not so good as her nephew, who often descended into the kitchen to assist her in preparing some dainty dish for his dinner. Cookery, now that he had put by Oxford learning (it having served his turn), had become one of his principal studies. He never rode, except

in his carriage, walked as seldom as possible, and his most active pastime was that of sawing his right arm to and fro across the strings of a huge unwieldy bass viol.

The Rev. Doctor had lately been casting his eyes about for a Mrs. Baillie, and had now begun to settle them on my aunt Maria, but was rather at a loss how to commence the courtship, for he had scarce ever been in ladies' society at Oxford, and in very little but that of his aunt Margery's since. Talking with her as if in joke, one day, on the subject: "Suppose now, Margery, I was to tread on her toe, what d'ye think she would say?"

"Well," said Margery, "of the numbers, more than I can reckon up, who have been bold enough to pop the question to me, no one ever began in that manner, and she seems to me to be a haughty kind of a body, that might not quite relish such horse play; ay, and an errant vixen she will turn out, I warrant me, if she had a husband. So don't go for to make a fool of yourself, by throwing your fortune away on such as her. And as for

the matter of marrying, what d'ye want with a wife, who will only be a plague and an expense to you. Ain't I a better helpmate than all the wives in the world?"

Now this was related to me some years afterwards by Margery herself; for though only a humble biographer, like the historian I here cite my authority for a fact which, not being an inmate of Dr. Baillie's house, I could not otherwise have known.

Well, the Doctor bethought himself in the end of a way of opening the courtship in serious earnest, and that was by paying my aunt frequent visits, and talking to her about religion. He was her pastor, and she was the favourite lamb of all his flock, whose welfare of soul he had at heart. It was his duty to instruct her: he came solely for that purpose, and to raise her thoughts to Heaven, that he might meet her there one day, where all was love, and peace, and joy; but as the devil can quote Scripture for his own purpose, I shall omit quotations for his end in view, which my aunt Maria repeated to me some years after. It

appeared, from her own account, that she not in the least encouraged his addresses from the mere vanity of being admired by him, and such I believe was the truth; for she had lived much at one time in the circles of fashion, and had had admirers there of a very different stamp to him; but had treated him with some of those supercilious airs which she had learned in the world of fashion,—had politely quizzed and bantered him on his sudden anxiety for her spiritual welfare, and begged that as he considered her to be the best of his flock, and therefore certainly stood least in need of his instructions, that he would transfer them to those whom he thought were the very worst, and remember that it was sinners, not the righteous, who were to be called to repentance.

Purblind through the sense of his own dignity and importance as a rector, with an income of 1500*l.* a-year, besides that of his fellowship (to be sacrificed, alas! on the altar of marriage), it was some time before he could perceive that Maria was laughing at him in her sleeve,—turning him into ridicule; and

terrible was his wrath when his eyes were at last opened to the fact. In the only way which he could discover to show his spite, he suddenly transferred his attentions to the gentle and consenting Tab, to the great satisfaction of Maria and my uncle. A joyful day it was to both when Miss Easy became Mrs. Baillie, and ceased to be the caterer at Cock-a-Roost Hall.

The Doctor, though out of mere spite, had made a discreet choice. There was no fear that his wife would ever laugh at him. Indeed, she was by nature insensible to that emotion, and never could comprehend how people managed to laugh, or what they laughed at, and she was very prudent and economical, so that she might probably make up for the loss of his fellowship by her savings.

I cannot end this digression from my uncle's biography by saying, that Mr. and Mrs. Baillie lived happily ever afterwards. Tales reached my ears from those busybodies always abounding in country villages, of disputes between Tab

and Margery for the championship and of violent altercations generally occurring instead of grace at the end of the parsonage dinners, even before the honeymoon was over.

CHAP. V.

My last Quarter at Chiswick School. — Dine at Dr. Hornet's own Table before leaving his School. — My Uncle fond of an Argument with Mr. Allworth. — For what Object he argued. — His Encomium on Truth. — Several Particulars of the Curate's Character, in which he differed from his Rector.

AFTER the holidays were over, I was sent back to my den of instruction at Chiswick, and with a heavy heart entered its iron gates. I had, however, something to console me, viz. a plum-cake made with my aunt Maria's own hands, a seven-shilling piece in my purse, and an increase of my weekly allowance to sixpence; so that I had a fair hope of keeping up my flesh this quarter.

I began to soliloquise thus: "Six-pence a week," I said to myself, "is a penny a day only for six days out of the seven; my pocket-money, the seven-shilling piece, makes eighty-four pence. This is to last me for three

months and a half, that is, reckoning in days, 114 days." Proceeding in the calculation, I found that I should be twenty-eight days with only my weekly allowance to support me. Now windows would be sure to be broken, the mending of which was deducted from the boys' allowances. These accidents had often reduced my weekly allowances to one penny. In the same proportion, it would reduce my sixpence to threepence. But then, reasoned I to myself *per contra*, balancing my little glutton's ledger, there's the cake, which I shall lock up in my book-case, which may serve me for ten days. That will save me from buying ginger-bread for ten days; then on Sundays we have plum-pudding, — but to end the calculation, while I thought only of my stomach my worthy uncle thought of my head, which I really believe was as well furnished with Latin, arithmetic, and moreover by religious instruction, as at any school in England, either then or since.

At about five-and-twenty or thirty, perhaps, the man looks back to his schoolboy days.

Ah ! happy time of life. The poet Gray, in his Ode on Eton, thus sings :

“ Oh, happy fields ! beloved in vain,
Where once my careless childhood stray'd,
A stranger yet to pain.”

This is all very well for a poet, and a splendid poet Gray truly was ; but I am writing prose, and I speak the words of soberness and truth when I say, that I can't help remembering the birch rod of my master, and handings up, as they were called, by the big boys, in which my back was regaled with a twisted steel toasting-fork or a ground ash with a knob at one end. In truth, it is a stage of life chequered with vicissitudes of sunshine and cloudy days, like all those that succeed, but in which the good, if we are wise, predominates over the evil.

It was on the 20th of December that I was eking out the last day but one in my school calendar, when Jack the master's footboy (he would have been a page in these days), entered the school-room, his mouth grinning from ear

to ear, and coming up to me, "Master Duck," he said, addressing me by my nickname, "you're to dine with the master to-day at four o'clock, and now clean yourself and make yourself tidy."

I did not much relish the invitation, having to enter a drawing-room, in which at that time I used to feel very shy and awkward.

At four o'clock accordingly I made my appearance in the drawing-room, with washed face, and brushed and combed hair, a clean shirt, my best jacket, and trowsers; and much surprised I was to find myself made so much of by Dr. Hornet, his wife, and his two pert daughters. "How sorry we shall be to lose you," said Mrs. H.; "your uncle writes us word that at the end of the holidays you are to be sent to Harrow."

Such an elevation raised me high in the eyes of the Hornet family.

Jack now, habited in a green coat with a red collar, which having been made for a taller predecessor, reached behind nearly to his heels, and if he was not very careful in his movements, tripped him up, entered the drawing-room, and announced that dinner was on the table. Mrs.

Hornet courteously led me by the hand into the dining parlour, where perfumes far sweeter to me than "all the perfumes of Arabia" were exhaling from those savoury dishes, which were the daily dinner of Dr. Hornet.

I doubt whether any nobleman in the land fared better than he did; as for his scholars, I have already said how they fared.

My last day at Chiswick was a sort of triumph. I was the envy and admiration of all my school-fellows; "he's agoing to Arrow," they said, in their cockney dialect.

Before leaving school I bequeathed all my stock of marbles, among which there were some valuable ring-taws, my pegtops, and my whole library of entertaining knowledge, namely, Joseph Andrews, to my crony Hatchett, a coachmaker's son, and made an *auto da fé* in the school-yard of all my school books. So ended my Chiswick career.

In two days from leaving Chiswick I reached home, for miles were not then traversed in minutes.

I now found Cock-a-Roost Hall as much

changed as if Harlequin had waved over it his magic wand ; for Aunt Maria had then become its presiding divinity. The table was neat, plain, and substantial ; the servants, who in Tab's reign had obeyed the summons of her shrill, cracked voice with sullen ill-will, now flew with alacrity at the sound of Maria's gentle but commanding voice.

The young curate, Mr. Allworth, (of whom I have only as yet said a word *en passant*, but of whom I shall enter into some particulars at the end of this chapter,) became now a frequent visitor at the Hall, being no longer scared away by the forbidding looks of Tab, who disliked him because he was liked by everybody else more than her then darling edifying Doctor. I merely introduce him here, as one with whom my uncle loved to hold an argument ; for though very fond of an argument, he would not argue with anybody ; not, for instance, with women, for fear of angering them, or with lawyers. To argue with them was like fencing with a shadow,—mere battling words to and fro, without a chance of arriving at truth, who from the

practice of their profession were equally ready to take this side of a question or that, and thus generally lost all sight of truth.

Now it was solely to investigate truth that my uncle ever argued. I fancy I now hear him saying: "Truth, Mr. Allworth, is the great problem to be solved in all things. Ah! truth is a sacred thing, Mr. Allworth, and I need not tell *you* so, for you are a lover of truth, and you speak truth, and the truth is in you; but the devil, who is the father of lies and the enemy of truth, has raised up so many enemies against it, hypocrisy, pride, self-interest, and more than I can name at the moment, that its light is totally obscured to many, or sheds but a glimmering ray upon them to lighten their darkness. And then how strange it is, and lamentable, that so wise and good a man as Samuel Johnson, who knew the truth, should so undervalue it as, merely for the paltry sake of triumphing by his skill in argument, to undertake an argument in favour of the grossest absurdity, by attempting to prove that black was white, and white was black. Is truth, then, a mere play-

thing? I think not. It is no matter to be trifled with, Mr. Allworth: this arguing is not for mere arguing sake, but for the object of unravelling truth from the entanglements which ignorance, prejudice, and the conceits of philosophers have coiled around it. If we argue for mere argument's sake, we may as well sit down to a game of chess, to hem a king of bone or ivory into a corner, and the end of which is that the successful player cries out 'checkmate,' and his beaten adversary, probably, throws board and chessmen into the grate." [He certainly forgot at the moment that he had done so himself.] "But you and I argue, Mr. Allworth, for the sake of digging up the truth from the well, and we thresh our brains to thresh it out, for it will no more come out to us than the grains of corn from the sheaf. I never argue with a logician," [forgetting that he sometimes argued with Dr. Baillie,] "but with a mathematician, such as you are; now to argue with a mathematical head is to *reason*, for I hold that the first six books of Euclid teach a man to reason better than

all the books of logic that have been written since the Deluge.”

I now pass on to Mr. Allworth, who differed from his rector in many particulars, and in these might probably be considered by many as his inferior. In the first place, instead of an income of 1500*l.* a year, his was but a fifteenth part of that sum; 2ndly, his sermons were neither so long nor so learned; 3rdly, he visited only the poor, to preach to them the Gospel, while his rector visited the rich to dine with them; 4thly, he walked on foot, while Dr. Baillie went about in his carriage; 5thly, he was not one of the High Church, but one of the lowest of the Low Church; 6thly, he never scolded little boys for buying a pennyworth of gingerbread or a lollipop on Sunday; 7thly, he was entirely deficient in that wily suppleness, that twisting, serpent-like, insinuating manner, in which the Doctor recommended the Gospel to the rich, as in that commanding manner in which he endeavoured to enforce it on the poor, thundering out to them that they were irretrievably damned if they believed not every

word in the Athanasian Creed, which was composed by very, very learned theologians, and which the simple fishermen who were the first apostles might not have understood themselves; 8thly, he preached as if he considered himself to be a fellow-sinner with those whom he was addressing. Such were the demerits of the curate, and such in opposition to him the merits of his rector.

CHAP. VI.

My Aunt Tabitha slanders my Aunt Maria.—My Uncle's Dislike of Dr. Baillie's Sermons.—His Observations to Mr. Allworth on the frequent Repetition of the Lord's Prayer in the Liturgy.—The Rector's Wrath against the Dissenters in his Pariah.—A Sketch of the Rooksnest Apothecary.

THE curate was much startled one morning, on entering my uncle's study, to hear himself addressed in this abrupt manner. He was striding up and down the room, in great agitation. "Allworth, *el Diablo se mescola di todo.*" The curate had never read Don Quixote in Spanish, because he knew not that language. These words were, therefore, as complete gibberish to him as one of the *unknown* tongues of some crazy fanatic.

"Yes, Allworth, the devil mixes himself up with everything,—he has a finger in every pie; the longer I live the more I am convinced of it. His cloven hoof peeps out everywhere, yet who

could have imagined him to have been so diabolically wicked as to have instigated one sister to slander another? Is it not astounding, incredible?"

"I grieve to say, sir, that it is no very uncommon case."

"'Tis unaccountable."

"It is accountable, on the score of envy, the strongest passion, I should rather say the basest and deadliest vice, of the human heart, for did not Cain in the beginning kill his brother Abel through envy?"

"Mercy on me! he did, so it may have been perhaps through envy that Tabitha has slandered her younger sister, my own Maria."

The curate was silent, and remained painfully attentive.

"Yes, she has slandered her sister as a sabbath-breaker, because Maria has not attended the last two morning services — ay, and me likewise, her own father. I absent myself from morning church, but I say my prayers at home, Allworth. Well, it is because those sermons—(of my son-in-law, he would have said,

but the word stuck in his throat) fall dead and lifeless on my ear;—those merely conventional discourses, such as you generally hear in our cathedrals; mere dry, unprofitable parades of learning on some controversial point of theology. I really cannot listen for a half hour to such humdrum. This is *not* preaching the Gospel to the poor, who constitute the great majority of a country parish church. Now I once recommended Baillie, but he would not heed me, to preach every now and then a sermon on the Lord's Prayer, in order to explain and illustrate it thoroughly—not, Allworth, that it is not as clear as the beautiful simplicity of its language can make it; but because it is so often repeated in the Liturgy that people get into the habit of hearing it without attending to its meaning. 'Use no *vain repetitions*,' like the heathen, but pray ye in this manner. Now this prayer is repeated five times in the morning service."

Mr. Allworth merely said that he thought that it would be hazardous to alter the Liturgy in any way whatsoever, because no one could see the end of such a beginning; but approved

of Mr. Easy's suggestion of a sermon occasionally on the Lord's Prayer, which was a whole Liturgy in itself. "Nay," he added, "I am of opinion that it would be greatly to the advantage of the Church to preach upon it, not merely occasionally, but regularly and frequently. But now, my dear sir, as to your frequent non-attendance at morning service, I must advise you, for the sake of propriety, and in order to avoid further scandal, to submit to your rector's sermons."

My uncle, who set a value on the curate's sense and judgment, promised to submit patiently to those inflictions.

The rector's sermons were as distasteful to that portion of the common people in the parish who valued a sermon, as to my uncle, who felt himself occasionally nudged by my aunt Maria, in order to keep him awake while Dr. Baillie was holding forth; and that portion emigrated to a dissenting chapel. The dissenters kept increasing. He was much mortified that any of his flock should desert him to run after an uneducated Methodist

preacher. He had sooner, I heard him say with my own ears once after dinner, have the devil in his parish, than a single Methodist. In his hatred against the sect (he called them a blaspheming sect) he said, that they ought to be denied Christian burial in the churchyard. It was after dinner, when he said it, or he could not have said it, that he would excommunicate his own bishop, nay, the Archbishop of Canterbury himself, if either of them tolerated those blasphemers. No doubt he said so under the reservation that he expected no preferment from either.

But enough, and perhaps more than enough, of the rector for the present. As the next important personage to the parson, in town or village, allow me now to introduce the apothecary.

Our Rooksnest doctor was a nice little duck of a man, well in flesh, but so short, that as he sat on his chair, his legs, not reaching the floor, dangled down like a little child's. A more lively, sociable, communicative little body to chat with was not be met with in the whole

county. The moment after he had just felt your pulse, told you to thrust out your tongue, and said he would send you something when he had got home, he would open fire on the subject which at the time seemed to engross his whole mind; and if you were too ill to talk yourself, would set to with any one present. During my present Christmas holidays, there was a grand subject for him to descant on, namely the Russian campaign. Napoleon the Great had just entered victorious into Moscow. "There he will pass the winter," said Dr. Quicksilver, "and march on St. Petersburg early in the spring. Nothing can drive him out."

The little doctor did not foresee, nor any one else, that the city would soon become too hot to hold him.

"Here," he said, "is Kutusoff; there Wittgenstein; yonder Platoff," marking out their several positions on the table with his finger — "all of them on the country which Napoleon would have to traverse on his homeward march back to France, instead of concentrating their forces between Moscow and St. Petersburg."

He ran on in this way to all who came to ask his advice in his little room at the back of his shop, with the map of the campaigns on his table until, great general as he was, the event out-generated him. The conflagration of Moscow drove Napoleon out in the autumn: down came a premature fall of snow, and the French army had to fight its way through those three corps, which our little apothecary said had been stationed on the wrong side of Moscow.

The little doctor's patients were never less attended to than they were during the whole of that Russian campaign.

Unluckily for me, having been suffering with the toothache this same year, he was sent for to extract it on the very day when the news arrived of the Beresina catastrophe; and thinking of nothing else but that, he pulled out a sound tooth instead of the decayed one. "Oh, no matter," he said; "we'll replace it presently;" and before I had time to remonstrate, at two tugs he brought out the decayed tooth.

My uncle used to take the "Times" with

him out of pure generosity, for he never expected to be repaid his half of the cost, though, to do him justice, it was sometimes deducted at the end of his bill. He often dropped in on us at tea, and sometimes his tongue would run on till so late an hour, that on taking out his watch, he exclaimed, "Bless me, if it ain't twelve o'clock."

CHAP. VII.

A sad, but true Story of poor little Johnny, the Curate's
Pupil.

My uncle was acquainted with a worthy and opulent merchant in London, whose son, then about twelve years of age, was so defective in intellect that, instead of exposing him to the rough chances of school, he had kept him at home, and done his best to teach and instruct him himself: but finding that he was now unequal to the task, was looking about for a tutor, to whose care he might safely entrust him. Now a shocking and lamentable event had lately occurred, which had warned him to be cautious on this subject. A brute and fool in this capacity had been tried for whipping, literally to death, a poor half-witted lad who had been entrusted to his care and protection. I remember that my uncle, after he had read

this tale of horror in the papers, declared that it was not a living man that had committed this act of barbarity, but an incarnate devil, who had animated the dead carcase of a man, whose soul had long left its earthly tenement (*vide* Dante's "Inferno"). However that might have been, he took a deep interest in the future welfare of poor little Johnny; he cast his thoughts about for a tutor for him, who might be depended upon, and suddenly fixed them on Mr. Allworth, as a thorough gentleman, and a Christian gentleman, who would never lift his hand against a poor lad whom Nature had brought forth so helpless.

The worthy young curate lived alone; my uncle opened the subject to him, and after weighing anxiously the importance of the sacred trust that was offered to him, Mr. Allworth considered that such a charge was strictly within the sphere of his duties, and consented to accept it. The salary offered, indeed, was large, but he earned it, and proved himself to be a labourer worthy of his hire.

Johnny was of a mild and gentle disposition,

but was visited occasionally by such fits of obstinacy as wearied, though they did not exhaust, the curate's patience, except in teaching him the Latin grammar, which his pupil would not learn, for the reason that he *could* not, though my aunt Tab thought she could have *flogged* him into it, and in her spite against Mr. Allworth, declared that he was pocketing a large salary and neglecting his pupil, — a calumny in which I take pleasure in saying her husband never joined her, who valued the worth of his curate, and always behaved towards him with kindness and respect.

That which Mr. Allworth could teach him he did, and with much labour and drudgery, standing over him, or kneeling by his side, as he endeavoured to instil it into his poor head. His father had never succeeded in making him repeat his Catechism correctly; but the tutor did, by setting him to write and re-write it, till it became fixed in his memory. He made him read aloud such instructive books in English as were suited to the level of his comprehension, learning passages by heart, and

repeating them, attending to every syllable of his pronounciation, and thus, from pronouncing every word clearly and distinctly in reading, to do the same in talking and in common conversation, and in this respect he had many his inferiors in his rank of society.

He was very fond of Pap Dod, as he called his tutor; next to whom he liked best my aunt Maria and uncle, and then myself. By a sort of instinct common to children, and even to some of the brute creation, he liked nobody who did not like him. Dull as he was, there was a natural kind of drollery about him, which rendered him far less dull to me than the dullest of the dull—a pompous ass. His amusements consisted in feeding his rabbits and guinea pigs; but the most favourite was that of riding his pony to Shrewsbury Hill to see the mail coach descending it. At the first sound of the approaching wheels he dismounted, and leaving his pony to gallop home if he chose, he set to hallooing and dancing in his grotesque way, while it was sweeping by, and till it was out of sight.

He was very fond of birds, and knew most of them by their plumage and notes, and their eggs and their haunts.

There was a bird, however, that he did not know, nor indeed any bird-fancier or ornithologist but the owner of this rare bird. A bird-catcher in the village, and a noted poacher, brought him one day in a cage a bird of such variegated plumage as comprehended every hue of the rainbow. This bird he brought up to Johnny one day, and sold it to him as a cock-a-awley bird, for one guinea, telling him that the bird never drank water, and that no pan of water should be put into his cage "on no account whatsoever." The maid-servant, however, after cleaning out the cage, humanely introduced a pan of water, when into it rushed the bird, washed himself all over, and forth came out the painted cock-a-awley, a humble sparrow.

It was a trick—a cheat; but if it be compared with that which was played him in after life, it was but a harmless joke,—an innocent jest. When poor Johnny (I call him poor,

now, in commiseration of the fate that befell him, although rich) had become a millionaire on the death of his father, a needy marquis, on the look-out for his daughter, had pounced upon him, like a bird of prey, for his son-in-law. He was not hard to win. The marriage was speedily solemnised: in one short month after he was found, by the verdict of a jury, to be an idiot, incapable of managing his own affairs, and which were till the day of his death committed to his wife. He remained ever afterwards in confinement.

No doubt, long before his final release for ever from the cage in which he had been entrapped, he really was a hopeless idiot. The marquis had done his work successfully, and a foul work it was.

CHAP. VIII.

My Uncle teaches me my own Tongue in the Holidays. — His Library, and how far he had profited from it.—A short Specimen of his occasional Lectures on Dante.

My tutor during the holidays was my uncle, who, leaving Greek and Latin to my school-master, instructed me in my own tongue, by reading with me the best English authors, and setting me to copying out in writing from memory what I remembered from them. On trying to repeat next day what I had read, I could not recollect a single sentence, and it was some time before I was able to construct one even grammatically. Another day he would bid me repeat from memory, *vivâ voce*, something that he had read from the "Times" on the previous day, from some debate in Parliament.

"Recite to me what Mr. Whitbread said on this subject in answer to Mr. Pitt, and begin

with 'Mr. Speaker,' as though you were Mr. W. himself, addressing the House."

"Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, — hum—hum, haw—haw . . . Mr. Speaker." "Hear, hear," cried my uncle. "Well, Mr. W. said" (and then he repeated a rather long sentence in his speech). "Repeat it, as well as you can, with as few haw-haws as you can help." It was still longer before I could speak a sentence grammatically of above one line, much longer than it had cost me to write one. Thus he taught me by degrees, but not without occasionally calling me dunce and blockhead, both to write and to speak tolerably my mother-tongue.

He had by nature that good taste in literature which made him utterly abominate the slightest mark of pedantry or affectation of language. "Here is a flimsy, third-rate critic, iterating and reiterating new-coined words (though I don't object to the words themselves), such as graphic, suggestive, felicitous, artistical, &c. &c." "Take," he said, "that rubbish down to the cook; here's a fellow who writes

English as if he were translating German. Down with him to the shades below."

His prime favourites in English literature were Shakespeare's "Macbeth," his character of Falstaff, Dryden's "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day," the "Allegro" and the "Penseroso" of Milton; Gray's Installation Ode, in poetry. In prose, Paley's "Theology," Addison's character of Sir Roger de Coverley, Sterne's "Story of Le Fevre," and Fielding's "Joseph Andrews." And there was another work, which I name by itself because it stands by itself alone; that is, the mighty work of Samuel Johnson's English Dictionary. He compared the great doctor in this work to a bee, which had gathered honey from all the choicest flowers of his native tongue.

In classical learning he outshone nearly all the country gentlemen of the county, knowing by heart, in Greek, three lines of Homer, and in Latin, some scores out of Horace, and dozens in the first four books of the "Æneid," besides almost the entire of Juvenal's Tenth Satire. But in modern and living languages,

to the study of which his travels had directed his mind, he was on familiar terms with the first part of Dante's "Divina Commedia," the "Inferno," which he had read and re-read together with all the notes of the commentators upon it with a perseverance quite exceptional in him, and had translated every word of it into English, and afterwards stowed the manuscript away in some place or other, where he never could discover it again; and probably, had he done so some years after, would have burnt it with his own hands, for he was not qualified to be an author.

In the foreign department of the Cock-a-Roost library, the great Dante, Ariosto, Boccaccio, two small unbound volumes of Petrarch, and an odd one of Alfieri, represented the literature of Italy.

France had sent to the Congress, Corneille, Racine, Molière, Boileau, Le Sage, Voltaire, and Rousseau; Espagna, — in Español, Don Quixote stood alone.

My uncle's library was a small one, but big enough for Dominie Sampson to have read

through and digested. He had only skimmed off the cream of its contents. Dante's "Inferno" he was well acquainted with, Ariosto's "Orlando Furioso," and many of Boccaccio's tales; and at the time when he had been crossed in love, had pored over the doleful ditties of Petrarch; but one or two of Alfieri's laboured declamatory tragedies had proved quite enough for his patience. But he had forgotten all that he had read out of the last three authors, *save* Boccaccio's tale about the feather of the angel Gabriel's wing, and that concerning the easiness with which a certain priest promised forgiveness of sins:—how, when a poor penitent sinner, with tears in his eyes, began confessing his sins, by owning that he had once cursed his mother, the priest comforted him by replying, "Is that all, my son? Pooh, pooh?" And then, that he had once spat in a church, and the good father only laughed at it; and then went on enumerating other crimes he had been guilty of, till at last the priest declared he must be a perfect saint to trouble his conscience with such peccadilloes.

French tragedy, as it was not to his taste, he could not justly appreciate, yet was fully sensible that the author of "Polyeucte," and the author of "Athalie" were great masters of their art. But Molière was his delight, and he held him up as the greatest genius in comedy that the world had produced, for his wit, humour, grace, and above all, his moral depth of feeling; and that, compared with him, Aristophanes (whom I believe he had never introduced himself to, except through the medium of an English translation) was no better than a coarse buffoon. Boileau he fully valued for his excellent good sense, judgment, and taste, as an accomplished man who was worthy to be a critic. One line of his, upon a noise in the streets of Paris at night, I often heard him quote "Est-ce donc pour veiller qu'on couche à Paris?" As to Voltaire, he had read little of his voluminous works, except his "Candide," which was so replete with satanic wit that the devil might have felt himself proud to have been its author. My uncle, allured by the singular beauty of his style,

had dipped a good deal into Rousseau, and admired the "Emile," but was perfectly astounded at the candid impudence of his "Confessions" —the audacity, the effrontery of them. It was but common charity to conclude that his brain was in a very crazy condition when he sat down to write them; for in one passage he says, as well as I can remember (my uncle observed), that, "having for a long time remained in a state of fearful uncertainty whether I should be saved or d——d, and being unable to solve my doubts, I one day suddenly bethought myself of deciding the question by throwing a stone at a large tree:—if I hit it, I am saved; if I miss it, I am d——d. So, stationing myself at a convenient distance, I threw the stone and hit it." There was something so horrible in a man of Jean Jacques' order of intellect satisfying his mind in this way on such a matter, that it would be almost blasphemous to laugh at its comicality. If Rousseau fabricated such a story as a specimen of wit and humour, he certainly much preferred the wit and humour of Le Sage in his

unrivalled novel of "Gil Blas." That playful style of badinage, in which the French excel, that flows from them with such ease because it is a gift of nature, was here, as in Pascal's Letters on the Jesuits, carried to perfection; the only good example of this style he believed, in English literature, was Hamilton's "Memoirs of Grammont," though the book itself had no other merit.

As a work of genius, Cervantes, in his "Don Quixote," had certainly far surpassed it, but "Gil Blas" was more an every-day book, because it exhibited so true a picture of the world as it is.

From what I have said on this subject, most people will agree that the squire of Rooksnest parish was quite well-read enough for a country gentleman, and that his neighbours would have considered him a great deal too much so had he made a parade of his acquirements. He did, however, sometimes intrude Dante's "Inferno" into a sociable chat with the little apothecary, who, being amused by the importance which my uncle attached to the subject,

and the strange fancies of Dante's genius, could not forbear laughing, and occasionally, my uncle thought, in the wrong place.

"Now behold," he began, "in the canto to which I now come, the hypocrites pass before you; and mark, my dear doctor, the appropriateness of their punishment; blinded, as they blinded others when living, by the steel visors which they cannot rid themselves of, and groping their way along. And now behold the usurers" (I think he said), "plunged beneath a sea of molten pitch; and as the rascals for a moment's respite raise their heads above the surface—(the poet likens them to a shoal of dolphins, those faithful friends of the poor mariner, lifting their curved backs above the billows, to warn him of the coming storm),—the band of devils who stand on the banks armed with harpoons, transfix those sinners, and hurl them down again into the boiling pitch, with many a scurvy jest at their expense, such as is suitable to the malignancy of their diabolical nature."

The little doctor burst into a laugh till my uncle again resumed. "And now behold the

traitors, up to their necks in pools of ice, feeling no doubt very uncomfortable, and so affected by the cold, that their teeth chattering against each other sound like the clacking of storks' bills. Ay, and that is not the worst of it, for one of these poor wretches implores Dante to cleanse the cups of his eyeballs from the congealed tears which have jammed them up."

I have given this as a mere specimen of one of my uncle's occasional lectures on that mighty poet, who, he often repeated, was thoroughly original in invention, and whom no writer has ever equalled in the simplicity, conciseness, and energy of his language and expression. With an inward consciousness of his own strength, he clothed his ideas in the simple language of the common people of his native city, Florence.

"Yes, with as little pretension to fine writing (the Lord preserve us from such tawdry pretenders!) as a Tuscan peasant would have scribbled off a ballad in his own illiterate dialect, Dante, the glory of Italian literature,

composed the third (in order of time) great epic poem of the world.”

Such is the little of all that I have succeeded in remembering, with some pains and labour, of that which my uncle said concerning his favourite poet, of whom I shall now take leave with the most profound respect, and introduce my uncle descanting upon a very different topic in the next chapter.

CHAP. IX.

My Uncle's Ideas on Political Economy.

My uncle, as well as the parson of Rooksnest, being a magistrate, they had each much to do with the administration of the poor laws, which at that time left much discretion in their hands, and they each administered the same law in as different a spirit as the Board of Guardians of the New Poor Law do at the present day. My uncle was all for the providence of *le bon Dieu*, heart and soul: the rector was all for Malthus, that celebrated political economist, who had just written with much ability a treatise on that science. Mr. Malthus had discovered (and therein he had all the merits of an inventor) a certain law, by which population and subsistence were thus regulated, namely, that as the first proceeded, doubling, in geometrical progression, as, 1, 2,

4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, and so on; subsistence kept increasing only in arithmetical progression, as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and so on; so that when the number of mouths to be fed amounted to 164, there would be but 8 loaves of bread to be divided among them.

Now Dr. Baillie, relying upon this discovery as a gospel truth, was humanely anxious to avert as long as possible the advent of such a calamity, by preventing, as far as lay in his power, the birth of any more little boys and girls in his parish, which he maintained, was already overburdened with them. The doctor told the poor man, as he tried in vain to beat this law into his head, that he committed a great sin in marrying, for he was bringing on a famine.

Arguing with my uncle on this subject, he maintained that a pauper had no right to indulge himself in a wife without possessing a competence to support her and his family. The poor rates were increasing every day; it was he who was obliged to pay the cost of the pauper's family, instead of the pauper's

father. "This burthen cast by the poor upon the rich is eating us out of house and home."

The doctor had, that very morning, written to London for a large jar of turtle to be forwarded to him.

"What mistaken policy to make the poor-house a huge living refuge for improvident idleness! I would improve it by making it a moral purgatory."

"Well, I am not enough of a philosopher," my uncle would observe, "to affirm by what geometrical and arithmetical limits the bounty of Him who openeth His hands and filleth all things living with plenteousness is restricted. His ways and His wisdom are far above my ken, and I hope even above the calculating head of Mr. Malthus to divine. Now, to prove a little the soundness of Mr. Malthus's theory, has he inquired into the present state of our agriculture, or is he wholly ignorant on that subject, and of the improvement of which it is susceptible? the number of waste acres that might be made productive, as more mouths

were to be fed, and as more hands, by the increase of population, would be employed in cultivation? Has he calculated on the benefits that may result from the improvement of manufactures, and by the greater quantity of labour employed upon them, the cheapening of such commodities to the advantage of the poor as well as the rich?"

"My good sir," the doctor would reply, "these are mere speculations, mere air-built castles of imagination upon which you attempt to reason, instead of upon facts. Now, Mr. Malthus reasons upon what *does* happen, not upon what *may* happen. This law which he has discovered, I consider that I, as a magistrate, am bound to enforce, and by God's blessing, as I am one under authority, I *will* enforce it to the best of my abilities."

In consequence of these different views on the subject, a poor man with a large family was an object of sympathy to my uncle, who would grant him out-door relief. The doctor considered him as an improvident fellow, who seated himself at the table which nature had

only provided for those who could afford to pay the reckoning.

The present generation, which has seen our population doubled in the last twenty years, and not by any means the worse fed and clothed by that increase, but quite the reverse, and who reflect with astonishment on the wealth which that augmented number of hands has created, may probably say that Mr. Malthus has turned out to be the speculator, instead of those who trusted to Providence in this matter. "Population has a tendency to tread on the heels of subsistence," said that great philosopher; but fact proves the contrary. He was but a false prophet, and his school mistook falsehood for truth. Men are not like noxious animals, like rats and locusts, that, instead of sowing, reaping, and getting into barns, and thus providing for themselves, do but devour what they can find and produce nothing; but look out for themselves and provide for the morrow, by emigrating to other lands when they find that they are exhausting the resources of their own. We

live by the sweat of our brow, but the sweat of our brow does enable us to live in one country or another. Such is the ordination of Providence, in spite of Mr. Malthus's geometrical *own* law of population and arithmetical law of subsistence.

CHAP. X.

A Weakness particularised in my Uncle's Character.

SUCH being my uncle Easy's ideas on political economy (as set forth in the preceding chapter), it would seem that he had none on private economy, or if he had, certainly never practised them, having by various inconsiderate expenses, the heaviest of which were those incurred by elections, diminished his income by at least 500*l.* per year out of 2000*l.* per annum.

He had always been negligent in money matters; a wise economy was beyond *his* wisdom, but had now retired from Parliament, into which he ought never to have entered, having neither inclination nor aptitude for the business of committees, nor being disposed to make himself a valuable auxiliary to any party, for in case of any differences springing up, he

would not have voted against his own opinion though the existence of his party had depended on it. Having no weight, therefore, in the House, he was only laughed at for his independence.

This indolent neglect of his own affairs had eventually entailed upon him far more trouble, time, and worry than would have been incurred by an hour or two set apart occasionally to looking into them, and casting up his balance-sheet, and retrenching unnecessary expenses. Not having courage to look difficulties in the face, he was necessarily unable to grapple with them when they came: he might as well have entered the ring blindfold, to contend for the champion's belt. By putting off the evil day, when it did come upon him he was overwhelmed by it, and unable to extricate himself from the slough; forced to apply to a man of business to help him out, having no head for business, and wanting steadiness to apply himself to that which afforded him no amusement or interest. I can well afford to deduct these weak points in his character from his

merits, since there remains a very good balance in his favour. I am a faithful biographer, and neither exaggerate nor set down aught in malice, whether for or against my late Uncle Easy.

“A faithful biographer!” says one; “but why make mention of a mere weakness, as you call it, that of your uncle’s outstepping his income? Nothing ought to be recorded of the dead but that which is to their credit.”

Because, I answer, this his weakness was a fault, that disabled him from being either generous or charitable; for how can a man be either, who forgets to pay his debts, and neglects justice to his creditors? And as to saying nothing of the dead but that which is to their credit, I repudiate, with others, that old saying, and agree with them, that nothing ought to be recorded of the dead but that which is *true*.

A second cries out, “Who is this uncle of yours? Who ever heard even his name before you attempted to thrust him on public attention by this biography of yours? Was he

a public man, in any way worthy to be spoken of?"

I cannot say that he was a public man, but he was "a man for a' that," and a man who was single-hearted and in earnest in all that he thought, said, and did, and therefore an eccentricity in the eye of the world. Had he been a Prime Minister, who had retained office, like Mr. Pitt or Sir R. Walpole, for thirty years, more or less, that which was entitled his biography, would have swelled itself out into a huge quarto volume of the history of so many years, that is, if Mr. Gifford had written it: if he had been a renowned general, into several volumes of his despatches: if he had been a most able governor of India under the now defunct East India Company, his biography might have passed into a very lame vindication of his morality: if he had been a man of science, into a treatise of the particular science in which he had gained distinction. Had he been a public man, in any sense of the term, his private character would have been lost sight of in that of his public. In such case, we

should have had nothing of the "inner man," of his *morale*, but — in place of being admitted behind the scenes, and chatting with him by his own fireside — have remained merely on nodding acquaintance with the squire of Cock-a-Roost Hall.

CHAP. XI.

Alfred Augustus Piecrust, of Lombard Court, not being a Popular Man in the County, my Uncle takes his Part, and defends him.

THERE was a person of very different character to the principal subject of my biography, who lived at Lombard Court, at the distance of about thrée miles from him, one Mr. Alfred Augustus Piecrust, the son and heir of Peter Pounce Piecrust. This father of his, as steward of a rich and spendthrift nobleman of the county, had managed to scrape up some pretty pickings, by taking care of his employer's estate, and at the same time by taking care of himself.

In nearly the same proportion as that nobleman's estate had gradually dwindled away, so had old Peter Pounce's increased. When the nobleman's mansion was, in about five years from the date of his steward's management,

pulled down, and the bricks put up to sale, Peter Pounce bought them, and up rose Lombard Court. It was a large unsightly pile of building, befitting the taste of one who had not been educated to acquire any taste at all, except for pounds, shillings, and pence. This was now Mr. Alfred Augustus Piecrust's habitation. He had been bred up a solicitor, and in that business acquired a handsome addition to the inheritance that had been bequeathed to him by his late father, upon whose decease he had retired from Gray's Inn to Lombard Court, there to sink the attorney into the country gentleman. As may naturally be supposed, from such an education, he was not such an incompetent manager of his property as my uncle. Much too sharp and knowing, as such a practised man of business proved himself to his tenants, they had no chance of having the best of the bargain with him. This was just the reverse in my uncle's case, and yet he was not a whit more respected by *his* tenants, because they had taken advantage of his indolence.

Mr. Piecrust did not understand agriculture so well as my uncle did, who had sometimes made improvements in agricultural machines, who was a connoisseur in cattle, and whose stock was always of the handsomest breed. Mr. Piecrust made *his* farm pay him better a great deal than my uncle did his.

Mr. Piecrust's manners, on the whole, were much such as might have been expected in a person who had practised in the Old Bailey, and was now a country gentleman with plenty of money, and a magistrate, and a deputy Lord Lieutenant of the county; they were rather coarse occasionally, than vulgarly fussy and pompous, as are sometimes the manners of a dull, proud, country gentleman, as well as of a city aristocrat. On the contrary, his were of too offhand an easiness, to suit such stupid, self-important people. "I could buy that old humbug, with all his pretensions, out of house and land."

He had, however, some pretensions of his own, being a deputy Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire, of which dignity he was so vain, as always

to put on that unmeaning fancy costume whenever he gave a dinner, or went out to dinner, or to a ball—and a droll little monster he looked in it, being not more than five feet two inches in height, and weighing fifteen stone or thereabouts; his arms were short, dangling down like the fins of a seal,—to which animal, if you imagine it to stand upon its tail, he bore some likeness in figure. Passing over his features, there was an expression in his countenance, imprinted on it by his professional practice, namely, a dash of impudence, effrontery, and raillery. By reason of his frequent indulging in the latter accomplishment, poor Dr. Baillie kept out of his way whenever it was possible, for, like most of his profession, the lawyer had ever ready at his tongue's end some joke to launch at the cloth. It was not easy, however, for the Doctor to escape him. Although the rector was never at home to his persecutor, who only snapped his fingers at the importance of a rector, he used to gibe him unmercifully whenever he caught him. Mr. Piecrust would not be denied, but would go

round to the back of the house, open the window of the Doctor's study, thrust in his head, and detect him, perhaps, over a basin of turtle.

Such unceremonious manners, which were proof against any ordinary rebuff, did not render him very popular in society, and he was very meddling besides in all county matters. He contrived, however, to keep up a certain place in society, by giving good dinners. Now and then he visited my uncle. One morning he drove over to the Hall in his carriage, and as soon as the usual friendly greetings had been interchanged, and the customary topics of the county touched upon :

“Mr. Easy,” he began, “as we are now, do you see, hard upon the eve of an election, and that the emancipation of the Catholics is now become the order of the day with ministers, I do think we staunch defenders of the Protestant establishment have no time to lose in organising our forces against that unconstitutional, and I say that most dangerous innovation. Now, Mr. Easy, under these circumstances, it behoves us to

weigh, examine, probe, search into, scrutinise, and ascertain the principles and character of those we are about to return to be our representatives in the forthcoming new Parliament. Now, Mr. Easy, if under present circumstances a candidate should offer himself for the county, of whose sincere, devoted, and inflexible attachment to true Blue principles we should entertain the shade of a shadow of doubt or distrust, we are bound in duty to throw him overboard instantly. Now, though both of our members who now offer themselves again are good Tories, yet one of them, do you see, is a little disposed to ratting. Under such circumstances, now, we have set up a right good man to stand against him, and that is Paul Craft, the banker, a thorough right-down Protestant and no mistake, who goes regularly to church twice on Sunday, and toasts the Pope every day after dinner, ha! ha! ha! Mr. Easy, you know what sort of a toast? Just after the fashion that the boys toast Guy Fawkes every fifth of November, ha! ha! ha! Of course, I think it looks a little Methodistical to attend evening service,

but you may depend upon it, he's a good man for all that, and right good company after dinner over his bottle. Take my word for it, that he's the right man under present circumstances, but we ain't going to press any one to vote for him, that is not agreeable to it, and so I hope we shall have your vote and interest for him, Mr. Easy."

The shrewd practitioner in the Old Bailey courts, who by his twenty years' experience had learnt to read the human countenance, even as if it were an open book before him, thus abruptly ended, as soon as he perceived the unfavourable impression that the name of Paul Craft had produced on his hearer's mind, and so with good tact dropped the subject; and not with an ill grace, for he had said his say, and cared not probably a rush about the banker, the Catholic question, or perhaps, even that Protestant Church, of which it is questionable whether he was really as earnest a champion as Martin Luther; even though he swore that he would wade up to his knees in blood for its defence. Leaving the matter therefore to my uncle's

reflections, he gossiped for another half hour about his intimacy with Lord such-a-one, who had told him in confidence the exact sum which he had pocketed by betting against his own horse, and several others of his noble intimates of very ignoble repute; called for his carriage, squeezed Mr. Easy's hand, and returned home, taking Shrewsbury circuitously in his way, where he was instantly informed that the pious banker who attended church twice a day on the Sabbath had failed that very morning; and perhaps the news did not very much surprise the lawyer, as he had lately been very cautious in accepting his notes. I question if he was as much surprised at the intelligence as Gil Blas was, when inquiring for his servant, Ambrose Lamella, he was told that he had gone to church, and afterwards discovered, too late, that he had robbed him, and made off with all his wardrobe, rings, jewels, &c., and all other valuables but his books.

Mr. Piecrust, though generally unpopular, was still a popular man in one sense of the word, for his name was in everybody's mouth,

and every one had a story to tell against him. He was the butt at which all aimed their arrows. They ridiculed him for his blunders in gentility and fashion; jested on his dress, ostentation, and person; but they who did so dined with him the most frequently, and there was not a table better spread throughout the county.

My uncle, whose nature rose against all injustice, always took his part, and because it was the fashion to run him down, cried him up, perhaps more than he would have done otherwise. "Why," said my uncle, "jest at his person; if there be any fault in that, is it his? think a moment against whom you are unthinkingly and irreverently levelling your jest. The man must be lamentably in want of wit indeed, who attempts to be witty on a man's personal peculiarities, and perhaps he never looks at himself in the glass. Then as to his vulgarity, he was placed at an early age in a solicitor's firm, the practice of which was far more lucrative than reputable. This was a bad school, indeed, for manners. He was not bred

up to be a country gentleman; he cannot ride a-hunting, no more can I. He preserves game *only* for his table, and not for the sport of killing it with his own hands. He understands little about horses, cattle, and so forth; he cannot talk away on wheat, turnips, oats, or barley for a whole afternoon. He talks sometimes about himself,—certainly this is no proof of his sense and modesty; but I have heard others do the same, only in a more skilful and underhand manner. But why does he talk so about himself? To endeavour to obtain some consideration, in consequence of his being generally treated so cavalierly by those who would remind him that they are his superiors in birth, education, and position in society. Then he forces himself into society; well, if society tries to shut the door against him, is he blamable for trying to effect an entrance on its threshold? Are you to carp at a man because he is inclined to be sociable? I maintain that he is a useful and valuable man in the county—useful on the bench, by reason of his legal knowledge and acuteness; and he is always

liberal in his administration of the poor laws, and therefore a valuable magistrate. Now, as to his ostentation. He subscribes more largely to charities, gives better dinners and better wine, than all his neighbours. I say, there is not a more hospitable man in all the county."

There is no harder swimming than that against the current of popular prejudice; and the more confined be the stream, the stronger it runs. Thus it runs stronger in the county than in a town — in a village than in a town — in a hamlet than in a village; and so my uncle found it harder to swim against the popular prejudice against Mr. Piecrust, in the county of Shropshire, than it would have been against any such prejudice in London.

I mentioned that Dr. Baillie avoided him, whenever it was possible to secure a retreat from so unwelcome an intruder: Mrs. Baillie, who had now grown very prim and demure, railed against him more uncharitably even than others, for the reason that nobody could divine whether he were of the High Church, or of

the Low Church persuasion. If he really were a member of the Protestant Anglican Church, he must be of the one sect or of the other. The man could really have no religion at all.

CHAP. XII.

The Lilliputian Controversy about the High and the Low Church.

It was, I remember, on my return home for the summer holidays, from Harrow,—(of which I need not speak, for it speaks for itself, in the fact that four Prime Ministers have been educated there, under one head master, and a noble specimen he was of the head master of an English public school),—that as I sat one morning with my uncle in his study, I could not help noticing that he was puffing his pipe with extraordinary energy. He could not imagine what had become of the tobacco, when on putting his hand into the bag he found it already empty. Just at this moment there was a tap at the door; “Come in,” cried my uncle; and Mr. Allworth opened the door and presented his welcome face.

THE SQUIRE.

“Now seat yourself, my dear Sir,” said the squire, “in this easy chair,” taking the curate by the arm, and depositing him therein; “you are my guide, philosopher, and friend; I pray you to enlighten me on a subject upon which I have been ruminating for the last two days, and through which I cannot see my way. Now, have I been in error, Allworth, in considering the Protestant Anglican Church to be a Church of itself, as is the Roman Catholic Church?”

The curate looked surprised, blew his nose, cleared his throat, put back his handkerchief into his pocket, twirled his watch chain . . .

“Because,” continued my uncle, who was too full of the subject that had caused him to smoke so furiously to wait longer for an answer, “because if the Protestant Anglican Church be one Church, and that you and your rector are both of that faith, how comes it that the religious folks here say that he is of the High Church, and that you are of the Low Church?”

“Well, Sir, Bishop Sprat was called one of the High Church, and Bishop Burnet of the Low Church in the time of William Prince of

the Uni-
 versities. — A
 "Swan" at
 Wet Summers.

his father-in-law
 up in idleness,
 with a fashionable

for though his late
 moderate independence,
 his bad figure in life by
 leaning on it, and as to a
 position being a school of idle-
 ness exactly see how such a con-
 dition followed."
 propose to bring him up to any

I should not have removed him
 sick."

end? Why, that my aunt Tabitha, together with half a dozen respected fussy people, had suddenly become so many profound theologians, and had detected a difference in the curate's doctrine, and that of his rector's, which neither of them could discover themselves. Rooksnest church was not then served as St. Barnabas and St. George's in the East have been served since, and greatly it would have edified Tabitha, possibly, if it had been so served.

Well, her tongue, which was busy while she lived, is now at rest. Poor aunty! she had her good qualities. She was a faithful wife, and never went astray; and devoted herself to Dr. Baillie, whether in good health or bad, to the last moment.

CHAP. XIII.

My Uncle's Conversation with Dr. Baillie about the Universities, on which Topic he is somewhat sarcastic. — A second Visit to the Landlord of the "Black Swan" at Shrewsbury. — My Uncle's Thoughts about Wet Summers.

ONE day Dr. Baillie asked his father-in-law whether he meant to bring me up in idleness, as he had placed me at such a fashionable school as that of Harrow.

"No," he replied, "for though his late brother had left Bob a moderate independence, he would make but a bad figure in life by doing nothing but living on it, and as to a school that was in fashion being a school of idleness, he could not exactly see how such a consequence necessarily followed."

"Do you purpose to bring him up to any trade?"

"No, or I should not have removed him from Chiswick."

“Do you think of a profession for him ; physic or law, for instance ?”

“No ; he hasn't abilities sufficient for either.”

“The Church ?”

“No ; he is quite dull enough for that, but I shan't pay the Church so ill a compliment as to make him a parson because he is fit for nothing else.”

The Doctor winced, and asked if my uncle intended to send me to either of the Universities.

“No, to neither, as I was not fit for any of the learned professions.”

“Well,” observed the Doctor, “a college education is certainly expensive, and money thrown away, if there is nothing to be got for it.”

“Yes, Doctor, it would be an expensive one, for I am aware, that in addition to paying for his learning, I should have to settle the debts he had contracted with the honest tradesmen of Oxford or Cambridge.”

“And besides,” said the Doctor, ironically, “the society into which he would be introduced

at college might give him too gentlemanly ideas for the position in life he was destined to."

"No, no, begging your pardon, Doctor, I think there is not the slightest apprehension of that. There is some fear, indeed, that he may be made a little gentleman of at Harrow; but none, I think, that a university education will increase that evil."

"What!" rejoined the Oxford man, who had been noted there for a great tuft-hunter, "ain't the first noblemen and gentlemen of the land sent to Oxford?"

"In a very small proportion to those at Harrow, taking into account the great difference of the numbers between the Oxford men and the Harrow schoolboys, or of the Etonians.

Hearing my name mentioned, as I sat like Q in a corner of the room, and not remembering that the Doctor was the son of an ironmonger, "Uncle Baillie," I asked, "when you first went to Oxford, did all the fellows—(*men*, you should say, Bob),—did all the men ask you what trade your father was of?"

My uncle saw that the Doctor reddened at the question, and asked me what I meant by it.

“Why, because all the fellows at Chiswick used to ask me, uncle, and wouldn’t believe me when I said that my father was of none.”

“Hold your tongue, Bob, and don’t interrupt us with your nonsense again. Now, Doctor, though of course I deny not that the two Universities are seats of learning, as they are called, yet I can’t but marvel how Oxford and Cambridge men acquire such a stock of learning, by sitting in those seats only about four months in the year.”

“Well, but reading men, who read for honours, study during the vacations,” answered the Doctor.

“Then they acquire three-fourths of their learning out of college, and but one-fourth in their seat of learning; and I hear also, that they pay the public tutors for their lectures, and are also obliged to hire a private tutor, such as is recommended to them, perhaps a Bachelor of Arts, as he is called, — a man

THE SQUIRE.

generally no more than three years older than themselves, who has just taken his degree, and who may be a stupid fellow, recommended only for the sake of a salary. A college education is really, as you say, an expensive one. But the gentlemanly ideas to be acquired there are worth consideration. There indeed a young man learns to pay respect to rank and wealth,—a most gentlemanlike idea, and he can't commit any mistake in the matter, for the nobleman is pointed out to him by his silk gown, and the rich are pointed out by the gold or silver on each sleeve, and the gold and silver tufts on their velvet caps. '*Palmam qui meruit ferat,*' Doctor. Then at Oxford, the gold or silver sleeved man is called *gentleman* commoner, at Cambridge, a *fellow* commoner,—that is, he eats his commons with the Fellows at the top of the hall, while the simple commoners dine at a more frugal one at the bottom. The gentlemen commoners, or the fellow commoners, naturally pay a little more for this distinction, and paying, as they do, more for their college education than the mere com-

moners, they are excused from attending so many morning chapels, &c., and are not expected to answer many questions in the lecture-room. Out, I say, upon the *toadies* who organised the system! And now, to go on with it, when the Bachelor's degree has been obtained, which it may be (so it was then) by the Oxford or Cambridge scholar just by brushing up what he had learnt before at school, he stands three years afterwards for Master of Arts degree, and has *literally*, I say literally, Doctor, to answer *Nescio*, I don't know, to each question that is put to him, for mere formality's sake, and then he writes M.A. to his name, if he may think it worth while to do so. Master of *Arts*, indeed! of what arts? Of that of architecture, or of painting, or of the art of pottery, or of the art of cookery, &c.? Do you call mathematics, logic, Greek, and Latin, *Arts*? 'O *Magistri Artium, sine Artibus!*' O Master of Arts, without Arts!"

"You're not a Master of Arts, however," rejoined Dr. Baillie, "nor yet a Bachelor of

Arts, for you were never sent to any university at all."

"Therefore, Doctor, I speak without any unfriendly *remembrance* of them; but now, Bob, wish your uncle Baillie good morning, and we'll fetch a walk, as they say, to Shrewsbury."

I had now become a stout walker, and got myself into wind by playing at hounds and hare across the fields and meadows around Harrow, but still could not keep up with my uncle's huge strides, except by a jog trot. On reaching Shrewsbury, we passed by Paul Craft's banking-house, which was now shut up, and soon crossed the threshold of my host of the "Black Swan," and entered the bar.

"Well, John, and how are you?" said my uncle.

"Poorly, but poorly, Squire, thank ye, Squire, and hope that all goes on well at the Hall."

"Oh, all as usual, John, all right."

"Then," said the landlord, "I would 'twas all right here in our town, for there's a many

of us in a mortal bad way;—but Lord preserve me, if I hav'n't forgot to ask what you and this young gentleman (bless us, how he's grown, and got up his flesh!) why *surely*, my young squire, this don't come of sour pudding and swipes? Well, as I was saying, what shall us give you, Squire? Well, now, if I ain't forgetting everything, but that there d——d swindling, church-going, Paul Craft's notes, and a pretty many of 'em I've got, and I wish he had been at the bottom of the Severn a week ago, before I took 'em,—if I didn't forget the collared brawn. Missus, the collared brawn, tankard of ale, sweets after the brawn for the young gentleman, and his bottle of currant."

While John's wife was preparing this excellent luncheon, and my mouth watering with expectation,—“Now, if that ain't a plain downright robbery,” continued our host, “fifty pounds at least, Mr. Easy, out of my pocket, if even I get the half back again of those dirty notes. Who in the world could have thought that such a thing was brewing now,

Mr. Easy? Here's a man that has been subscribing to hospitals, schools, and all those sort of charities, as they call 'em, and to the fox-hounds, and has kept a good table, and let the barrel run below stairs, and at last sets himself up for the county, and passes for a pious man because he's a church-goer, and whose money we were all looking to at the election,—who'd have dreamt that he was all the while worse than nothing? Well, I shall never look upon above half of my money, if even so much, again. Fifty pounds! I'd sooner a highwayman had honestly got it out of me, with a pistol in hand, and then I should have paid it for money's worth, seeing I'd sooner have paid it than have been shot through the head with a bullet: but to have been done out of my money by a swindling, psalm-singing fellow like that, 'tis out and out vexatious, Mr. Easy. And then that there bankruptcy-law, why it's an encouragement to such rogues. For here it is,—Paul Craft is made a bankrupt, he gives up all that he can, so far as to save his neck from a halter.

But he ain't obligated, as I'm advised, to give up his wife's settlement,—not the principal, howsomever, as I'm advised. Well, after he has given up all he's obligated to do, he comes out of court, whitewashed, and as the devil takes care of his own"—("Ay," exclaimed my uncle, "he is sure to have a finger in every pie,")—"contrives, somehow or other, to set up some other swindle, and pops upon folks as a wine-merchant, or belike as a brewer, and so, d'ye see, Squire, there's no end of the rascal."

Here, however, ended John's oration, by the introduction of the luncheon; but there was no tankard of ale now, as on our former visit, brought in for *him*,—whether that he could not now afford to consume a shilling's worth of his old October, or that it was not the right sort of liquor for him in his present dejected state of mind, so he ordered his wife to go to her own cupboard, and pour him out a glass of gin.

"Ah! these are hard times enough, Squire Easy, when the everlasting tax-gatherer keeps

knocking at a man's door, eight days out of the seven days in the week, without being bubbled out of your money by a rascally rogue of a banker."

"Why, John," said my uncle, "how comes this? you promised us only collared brawn, and you've given us a collared boar's head."

"That's just me that am in fault," said the landlady, "for thinking your worship would prefer it. It's just come by the mail from Oxford,—a real wild boar's head."

"And it does justice to the Oxford master of arts," replied the Squire, "it is excellent; but I wonder at seeing the tusks in the under jaw, when nature usually places them in the upper."

"Well, no matter for that," observed my host, "as long as it's a good relish; but now who's going to contest the county, I want to know, against him who, they say, is no staunch Protestant, now that Paul Craft has thrown us all over? Why don't you stand up for it, Squire?"

"I can't afford to purchase a seat in Parliament," said my uncle, drily.

“Well, there’s Squire Piecrust, why don’t he? a staunch churchman, though he don’t set up, like that rascal Craft, for a saint, that’s sure; but no matter for that, we be all of us sinners, I *do* believe.”

“More or less,” said his wife.

“Well, more or less, at the bottom of our hearts. No man, however, can say black is the white of *my* eye.”

“Of course not, John, nobody will say so.”

“No, no, nor of you either at last Shrewsbury race time, I suppose.”

“Come, Bob,” said my uncle, “drink your currant wine, we must be going; and now, John,” he said, putting into his hand quite as much as he would have had the conscience to charge, even under present circumstances, “remember a rainy day often brings a bright morrow.”

“It hasn’t done so this summer, Mr. Easy, nor the last, nor the one afore, nor seems likely ever to do again; and we haven’t summer weather now, as we used to have. The seasons are quite entirely changed—worse and worse

every year. Wheat is selling now at 45*l.* a load in the market, and bread is up to 2*s.* the quartern loaf."

"Then," rejoined my uncle, "we who can pay for it must deal it out to the poor and hungry who cannot;" an answer that inflicted a twinge on the landlord's conscience, who thought no more of them than of the slaves of our West Indian planters, except when the poor-rates reminded him of them.

"It is a sure sign," my uncle began, as we were descending the hill from Shrewsbury on our return home, "of his moral, if not of his physical decrepitude, when a man begins to grumble and to complain like John."

I here interrupted him, for he was talking, as he often used to do, in a way beyond my age. "What's the meaning, pray, uncle, of moral, physical, and decrepitude?"

"Right, very right, to ask me the question," he said, greatly pleased, "it shows me that you have an inquiring mind, that you will gather knowledge year by year. *Macte* (my Bobby) *virtute*. I will define these words you

don't understand, I will give you their derivations. 'Moral,' which is derived from the Latin word *mores*, appertains to the mind: if, for example, I say, John is morally incapable of such a thing,—that is, I say that, from the constitution of his mind, from his habits of thinking, he is morally incapable in such a matter. 'Physical,' derived from the Greek word, *phusis*, nature, applies to the body. For example, I say that John is physically unable to play at cricket; he has not the activity of body requisite for that English game; his limbs are debilitated by gout,—weak, stiff, without pliancy. 'Decrepitude' (which I conjecture, but you must look the word out in Johnson's dictionary, is derived, I don't know from what,) signifies the slow creeping gait of the old, which is the natural effect of the infirmities brought on us all by old age.

“As to John, both his moral and physical decrepitude has lately outgrown his years, and he has to blame his habit of drinking for it; and, indeed, being an inn-keeper, the temptation is ever before him. Drink is

beginning to cripple his legs with gout, to sour his temper, and to confuse his brain. Just now, because there have been three succeeding wet summers, he, quite forgetting the series of three preceding fine ones, declares that the seasons are changed, and despairs of ever seeing a fine summer again. To be sure, he is not the only croaker on this subject, for I have been obliged to laugh in the face of other such noodles.

“ Now men of science have assigned a cause for these wet summers — (my uncle here made a dead halt for some time, insensible to the pelting rain that was now drenching him and myself to the skin), — which, after some hours’ consideration of the subject, I conjecture may be a probable one ; reserving, however, a further reconsideration of it to a future day — namely, to the number of icebergs loosed and detached from the frozen regions of the polar circle, and which said icebergs now floating further than usual down the Atlantic Ocean, have chilled our atmosphere, — the evaporation from these floating masses of ice being wafted

over to us, are now descending upon us in these infernal showers—but let's get on, Bob, for I think it's just beginning to rain, and I shall resume this dry topic on some more befitting opportunity, Bob."

Then, resuming his strides, he presently came to a second halt. "There is a continual round of changes in this our sublunary world. Astronomers say that the earth's axis advances a certain number of degrees in one direction, and in the next cycle returns in the contrary one the same number of degrees; that the moon during one cycle (I think of 10,000 years) continues to approach nearer to our earth, and recedes from it in the next cycle the same distance; so, changing as everything continually is, we have our cycles of wet and dry summers, and our cycles of mild and hard winters."

This was our last stoppage, and on reaching the Hall, aunt Maria declared that we looked like a pair of drowned rats.

CHAP. XIV.

In which my Uncle's Name is not once mentioned.—Further Development of Mr. Allworth's Character.—How he visited the Poor; and how made an Example of a dishonest Chandler.

ON calling one day at Mr. Allworth's house in the village, for the sake of enjoying a day's birds'-nesting with Johnny, who was then free and happy under the guardianship of his worthy tutor: "Good day to you, Master Easy," said the curate, "Johnny and myself are just about to go our rounds in the parish, and we shall be very happy if you will accompany us." We accordingly, this being perhaps less agreeable to my taste than a birds'-nesting tour, started all three on this home circuit.

Having reached the end of the little village, in a few minutes we came to a poor cottage,

and entered it, after passing through a patch of garden-ground planted with potatoes and onions, and ornamented with three hollyhocks. Its tenant, the wife of a labourer, and mother of a boy and two girls, was about to prepare their dinner. A piece of bacon, a loaf of bread, and a little canister of tea lay on the table. The bacon was as yet uncooked, and Mr. Allworth, observing that it was but a small piece, inquired what was its weight.

“It was weighed to me, Sir, for a pound at the shop.”

“What’s the weight of this tea?”

“Why, a quarter of a pound, Mr. Allworth.”

“Now, Johnny,” said Mr. Allworth, “run back home and fetch me my scales.”

While Johnny was on his errand, the woman began to whine forth a tale more piteous than true, as the curate well knew, in that canting way habitual to some of the poor, who are, perhaps, better off than some of their more needy neighbours. That was no reason, however, why the curate should not trouble himself to endeavour to redress an injustice that

had been done her, as he more than suspected, and which the scales that Johnny returned with immediately verified.

“Now, Dame,” he said, having cast the matter over in his own mind, “as you say that you have no money at present, I will lend you this, but I shall require the repayment of it at the end of the week;” for he knew by *giving* her money that it would be encouraging her to live on charity; “now, send your little boy here with this money, to bring back a pound of bacon and a quarter of a pound of tea from the shop, and we will weigh it when it comes back in these scales,” which he did accordingly.

Having ascertained the exact quantity in which the weights of the honest rogue of a chandler were deficient, he carried his scales with him and went on to the next cottage, but nothing could induce Johnny to enter it. It was the domicile of the fellow who had passed off upon him the bird of variegated plumage that never drank water, of whom he had such a horror, that whenever he saw Cocks-awly Bird man he always ran away from

him as fast as his legs could carry him ; so Mr. Allworth passed it over.

I am sorry to observe, that he was not so well received in all of the cottages as he ought to have been ; for the poor, like the rich, are not fond of being interfered with, even when the interference is to their benefit, thinking to themselves, if not bluntly speaking out, What business is this of yours?—mind your own, and don't meddle with what concerns me alone. Nor, indeed, was the curate the fittest person, except from his office, to manage well so delicate an affair. The severer studies, as they are called, the mathematics, had, perhaps, increased a natural predisposition in him to judge rigidly and sternly in every question of right or wrong. If any man had been unjust in his dealings, had been in the wrong, or in error, even to the prejudice of his own personal interest, he drew the same rigid corollary as to the injustice done towards his neighbour or himself, as he would have done from any proposition demonstrated in Euclid—making little allowance either

for human infirmity under peculiar temptations, or for error, or for ignorance. His manners also, in some degree, often partook of this rigour, though they were always such as became a gentleman and a man of sense, and were never coarse or vulgar, yet they could not, upon the whole, be called amiable, or ingratiating in mixed society or towards strangers. He could not be blamed, assuredly, because he would not submit to the self-degradation of wheedling or flattering any one for his own interests ; but he might have accommodated his manners more to those of others, without humiliating himself in his own opinion, that is, in matters of mere indifference.

But if we compare the curate with his rector, greatly, indeed, will the former gain in our estimation. The doctor was fussy and pompous in his manner towards those whom he considered to be his inferiors (not so, however, as I before observed, towards Mr. Allworth), and bland and oily towards those whom he looked up to as his superiors. Then, in point of know-

ledge and information, the curate was vastly the better man, who had not flung away the books which he had studied at Cambridge, as had done the doctor his Oxford books, after they had served his turn to obtain his degree and a fellowship, and kicked down the ladder as soon as it had helped him to ascend; you would gain information from conversing with the curate, while the conversation of the rector was contemptibly common-place and trivial. Indeed, his head was now nothing better than an unfurnished garret, and became more and more desolate every year.

We will now accompany Mr. Allworth, after his parish inspection, to the honest chandler's shop. "Mr. Sharp," he said, on entering the shop, "are you quite sure, excuse me, that your scales and weights are quite correct?" This he said (for I must allow that he had recourse to some dissimulation in the business) with an affected hesitation of manner, that emboldened the questioned to make answer. "Yes, *Muster* Allworth, I am sure; and excuse me, too, if I take the *liburty* to say,

as no gentleman as calls hisself a gentleman, has a right for to go for to insinuate against me no such a thing, Muster Allworth. I'm a respectable man, Muster Allworth."

"I mean to insinuate nothing against you, Mr. Sharp."

"Then why do you go for to ask me such a question, Muster Allworth?"

"Because I've heard something about the subject from one or two of my parishioners."

"What do you, a man of sense, Muster Allworth, go to believe all the falsities that the poor of the parish tells you? I'll take my Bible oath that I never cheated you out of a penny—no, nor nobody else."

"You sent me this morning articles that were deficient in weight."

"No such a thing, how can you say so? Why I han't sold you a thing all the blessed day."

"Yes, a pound of bacon and a quarter of a pound of tea."

"Lord! you're joking, nobody come to me for no such a thing."

“Yes, Dame Sparrow’s little boy came for those articles.”

“Why, Lord a mercy!” said Mr. Sharp, opening his eyes, “that was for Dame Sparrow.”

“Well, I apprehend, Mr. Sharp, it matters not whether the pound of bacon and the quarter of a pound of tea were for his gracious Majesty, or for Dame Sparrow, or for your humble servant. The first article was deficient in weight one ounce, and the second five penny-weights;” so saying, he took the weights out of the scales in which the shopman had just been weighing a pound of butter, and compared them in his own scales with his own weights.

“Now, Mr. Sharp,” he continued, putting the chandler’s weights in his pockets, “I shall show these weights to the magistrates next Monday morning. You can do without them for a day or two, because you can use those with which you weigh the articles which you send to me, and which are correct, as I know, having tested them by my own;” and so the curate left the shop without waiting for an answer.

Meanwhile Dame Sparrow had been active in spreading the fame of the chandler through all her neighbourhood, so that when Mr. Sharp was forced to deal out bacon and tea next day with honest weights, he was assailed on all sides by infuriated women, who demanded an ounce more for every pound, and so on in proportion to the lowest weight that was sold them. Cheat, rogue, rascal! sounded on every side; and Mr. Sharp, in order to silence them, was forced to comply with all demands, and to sell at less than prime cost until the affair was at last settled by the inspector of weights verifying the accuracy of those which he was now using; but that affair was not settled with the chandler until the curate had brought him up before the bench, where he was fined in the highest penalty that the case admitted of.

CHAP. XV.

Mr. Allworth in after Life refused to be made a Bishop, because he would not say, *Nolo Episcopari*.

I SUSPECT that it would have required a long length of rope to that plummet which could have sounded the depth of Mr. Allworth's knowledge. Mine, I know, would have reached but a very few fathoms, and I am therefore unable to judge of his acquirements in mathematics, natural philosophy, and in that which more immediately bore upon his profession—divinity. This I think it is pretty certain from his character, he studied deeply, because, being a divine, he would have blushed to have been ignorant in that science. It is certain that he was given credit at least for his knowledge in divinity; for when in after life he had risen to be an archdeacon, the government of the day appreciated his learning and merits. For the

government, beginning to feel it necessary for its character, after the scandal they had created by making several bad appointments to the bench of prelates, offered and even pressed upon him a bishopric, which he constantly refused to accept. When the reason became known for his declining the emolument and honour, it was held by the world, as it will be now, to be a very whimsical one. I have before noticed, the severity and rigour with which he carried out any moral question of right or wrong to the extreme. That whimsical reason, then, which determined him not to submit to having a mitre thrust upon his head, sprung from a mere scruple of repeating two words, “*Nolo episcopari*,”—I am not willing to undertake the office of a bishop, or, I decline to be made a bishop, or, I won't be made a bishop, or in whatever way people choose to translate the “*nolo*.” He was *said* to have said likewise on this subject, what I think it very unlikely that he *had* said, for the reason that on all Church subjects his language was particularly guarded, reserved, and discreet, namely, that if ever he

pronounced these two words, he would suit the action to the word, and prove that he was not mock-modest in saying that he was unwilling to be made a bishop, by instantly walking out of the conclave as soon as he had uttered the two words. And he was said to have said, moreover, that as every man would have one day to answer for every idle word, who could say but that bishops might have to answer for these?—and that they were more than idle—they tempted a man to speak an untruth, to qualify him for a sacred office in the Church. If it were meant merely as a jest, it was not a fit subject to be jocular on. At the very best, the words were ridiculously childish.

Whether he were in the right or in the wrong, in considering these words of mere formality as meaning anything or nothing, no one but himself, in his own case, had any right to decide. His conscience might have been more tender in this matter than that of the other dignitaries of the Church. He might have had a less attachment to number one,

than some Dean of York. He might have been more reluctant to eat "his peck of dirt" so early before he died. He might have been less wise in his generation than the other reverend children of this world. We must leave the question, whether he were in the right or in error on this point, to his own conscience to decide. My uncle once said on this subject, "Why not change a single letter in those two words, 'Nolo episcopari,' into 'Volo episcopari,' and all would be right: the sincere aspirant to a bishopric would be made a bishop, as he would then truly say, I wish to be, and the mitre would not be forced upon the head of a modest man, who declared he would rather not accept it."

Mr. Allworth incurred, by this remarkable delicacy of conscience, taunts such as these—that he was over-righteous, obstinate, and bigoted in opinion, an impracticable person to deal with, weak and timid in mind. But, though his conscience had rendered him afraid to submit to a mere formality, to accept what he had duly earned, he was a brave man both

personally and morally. Whether on land or at sea, he would not have swerved an inch from the path of duty in the day of battle ; he who had never swerved from it under the banner of the Cross, by fortitude in self-denial, and facing the blame and ridicule of the world, when it was necessary so to do, in the performance of his duties.

CHAP. XVI.

A fill-up Chapter; being the shortest Chapter in the whole Work.

"Nonsense is nonsense, in prose or in verse."

Rejected Addresses.

To keep the mind continually on the stretch, is like keeping a bow continually strung. The mind, as well as the string of the bow, loses its elastic spring. To be always at his book, makes Jack a dull boy. Toil and labour, according to the constitution of our nature, require relaxation and repose. Homer sometimes nodded; Montaigne played with his cat; the learned head of a college has left the academic groves of Oxford, for a trip on the Continent, for the sake of health of mind and body; Mr. Spurgeon is at Baden-Baden. The merchant quits his desk, the banker his

counting-house, the stock-jobber the Exchange, each Saturday evening, to enjoy a Sabbath's rest in his country villa,—all to unstring their minds, and restore their elasticity.

“‘Leave your damnable faces, and begin;’ ‘Quo tendis, furcifer?’ what are you coming to at last, after this roundabout commencement?” cries Mr. Grumbler.

I am writing to fill up a certain number of pages, as Sterne did in his “Tristram Shandy,” as Dr. Southey did in his “Doctor,” as Lord Castlereagh talked away against time; so I am now writing according to the most artistical method of book-making.

“‘Decipit exemplum, *vitiis* imitabile;’ and it has deceived *you*. What! do you, in your conceit, suppose that you can write such very clever nonsense as the author of “Tristram Shandy,” or such very learned nonsense as the doctor doctissimus of the ‘Doctor?’ Away with your froth and flummery! I’ve had more than enough of it.”

“My good Mr. Grumbler, I have not yet filled up a couple of pages with what you call froth and flummery. Look at that table there,

you will see a three-volume novel by Mrs. A., son Alfred, and brother Adolphus; and another by Mrs. B. and son; and yonder the last new novel of the season, by the Hon. Augustus Jemmy Jessamy. Well, my dear Sir, I have to spin out this work of mine into the prescribed three volumes, to amplify, to expand, to dilate, and to dilute the matter, so that it may cover at least a square acre, exactly the ground which the sheets of a three-volumed novel cover, having myself made the experiment."

"I understand; and now I advise you to make up another page of nonsense in your book, by thrusting into it what you have just said."

"Thanks, kind Sir, for the suggestion; I certainly shall do so."

"And what do you think of asking for your made-up book?"

"One guinea."

"I'll see you — at Jericho, then, before you *cheat me* out of a guinea."

"Cheat you, Mr. Grumbler, what mean you?"

“Thou man of pen and ink, wouldst thou not call the wine-merchant who sold thee a bottle of wine, in which there was one pint of wine and one pint of the pure element, a cheat, for passing on thee a bottle of wine and water for a bottle of wine?”

“And pray, Sir, what think you of Sterne,—as an author, I mean.”

“I am glad to hear you say as an author, for it is a more gracious task to praise than to censure any man or anything. Lawrence Sterne, Sir, was a man of pre-eminent genius. There are pages on pages in his ‘Tristram Shandy’ which I have not seen equalled in English literature, either for pathos, wit, or humour. And as to his style, it is his own, and his own only. There is such an air of ease and simplicity in it, such beauty in his language, that, — that, — that I can’t find language to express.”

“Pray, my dear Sir, proceed in your panegyric; you hav’n’t said a twentieth part of what you might have said of this pre-eminent genius.”

“Egad, I begin to smell a *rat*. Yes, yes, I see through you. You want to suck my brains,

and to fill up a dozen pages with my sense, instead of with your nonsense; and then you'll sell me, if you can, your made-up trumpery, in which I shall read second-hand my own words again."

So saying, Mr. Grumbler stuck on his hat with an air of defiance. So ended my dialogue with him, and so ends this chapter.

CHAP. XVII.

The Pleasures of Rooksnest Village.—Jemmy, the old Sailor, and his Story of his meeting a Bear in a Desert Island; and what a strange species of Bear it was.

THOSE were happy days, that I love to recall to remembrance, when Johnny and myself perambulated the rural village of Rooksnest, here looking in on the blacksmith shaping horse-shoes on his anvil, there on the baker beating the dough; now peeping in on the cobbler, with whom we held instructive conversations; calling on Grace the Quaker for one of his French plum-pies; on Mother Mash for a syllabub and a Shrewsbury cake; on Timberlake to select one of his pegtops, or a cricket-bat or ball, or one of his thumbed novels, and to take a survey of the thousand-and-one articles exhibited all round his shop, and darkening the window: such as fustian jackets, and smock-

frocks, and hats, and caps, and waistcoats, and umbrellas, and fishing-rods, and reaping-hooks, and dolls, and rocking-horses, and Jews' harps, and drums, and pea-shooters, and squibs, and crackers, and white clay-pipes, and brooms, and brushes, and pots of blacking, and pots of ink, and copybooks,—but I should never finish enumerating Timberlake's stock.

Though the Rooksnest cobbler was unquestionably, like Dr. Johnson, a man of great conversational powers, yet the most entertaining fellow in the village to have a long gossip with was a man of about forty, who had served as a sailor on board a man-of-war, and had now turned his hand to carpentering. Said the country people, "He has *bin* at sea; he is the man as was at Trafalgar."

"Well, my young hearties," he said, one day, as we found him working away with his plane in his shop, "now let down both your anchors here awhile, after your cruise, and let's have a bit of talk; but afore I begin, couldn't you just feel in an odd corner of your pockets for a something just to wet my throat? I know

Master Johnny likes a story, and so do you, for the matter of that, Master Bob. Why, you look as if you'd had a better allowance of beef and biscuit since I saw you last."

"Now, let's have a story," said Johnny, putting a sixpence into the carpenter's hand.

"Well," said he, "did I ever tell you our visiting once an uninhabited island, when we had been driven out of our course, the time as I was aboard a merchantman coming home from the East Indies? We'd lost our reckoning, and didn't know where we was, and we was sadly in want of water at the time. Well, I was on the foretop on the look-out, when I spied out, very clear and distinct, as I see you now, land ahead. So out I sings, 'Land ahead!' and, sure enough, land it proved to be."

"Now, tell us, Jemmy," said Johnny, "what sort of a looking place was it?"

"Why, it looked, at first sight, like a high rock, but so soon as we neared the land, we came in sight of a fine level beach of yellow sand, and groves of cocoa-trees, and a beautiful stream

of water running down into the sea from the mountains.”

“Now, what sort of looking trees are cocoa-trees?” inquired Johnny, as he now began to feel greatly interested.

“Well, something very like birch-brooms stuck up on end. Well, as we lay off the island, to look out for some place to land for to get water, the captain, after looking through his telescope, says to me, ‘Jem, Jem,’ says he, ‘yonder is a good landing-place,’ pointing it out to me (’twasn’t a mile off), ‘and do you and three of the crew let down a boat, and take all the water-casks with you that she can carry, and sling a pair of pistols about you, and set off for the island.’ Well, to make a short story of it, we pulled away, and found the landing-place, and set foot ashore on the island.

“Well, we didn’t see no marks that it was inhabited, when all of a sudden, ‘Jack,’ says I, ‘d’ye see that great big bear there coming out of the wood, and walking on his hind legs?’ ‘My eye,’ said Jack, ‘I never seed such a tall

bear afore. Let's hail him, Jem, with our speaking-trumpets,' said Jack, pulling a pistol from his belt. 'No,' says I, 'Jack, let's wait till he gets within better range.'

"Well, on stalked the bear towards us on his hind legs, advancing nearer and nearer.

"'Shiver me!' said I, 'if the bear han't a beard as long as my arm, Jack.' 'My eye!' said Jack, 'if ever I seed such a bear afore as that; why, Jem, if we could contrive to catch him, and carry him with us to Lunnun, our fortin is made.'

"Well, all on a sudden the bear stopped stock-still, and put his two fore paws together, just for all the world as if he was begging or praying.

"'My eye!' said Jack, again, 'well, shiver me if ever I seed the like afore of a bear praying. Depend on it, Jem,' says he, 'he's the bishop of this here uninhabited island.'

"Well, I'm blessed if the bear didn't then say, in as good English as I say it now, 'Brother Christians, if ye understand English, now listen to your fellow-countryman.'

“Well, now we did stare at hearing the bear talk; and we couldn’t make nothing at all of how he should learn to speak English, or any other Christian tongue whatsoever, for the matter of that, till all of a sudden, ‘Jack,’ says I, ‘I have it. Didn’t you ever read in Hissop’s Fables of bears, and wolves, and monkeys, and such like critturs, talking just like Christian folks? Depend on it, Jack, this is one of them critturs.’ ‘No,’ said the bear, ‘I am a human being, like yourselves. This is but the skin of a bear, with which I have covered my nakedness.’

“Well, he said that he had lived, I do not remember how long, on this uninhabited island with a black nigger, who now showed his face, coming out of the wood; he then besought us to carry him with the black man to the ship; and who d’ye think it was, Master Johnny? I’m blessed if it wasn’t Robinson Crusoe and his man Friday.”

“Well, now,” cried Johnny, “ain’t that a story now, Jemmy?”

“Why, didn’t you ax me to tell you a story?”

but it's true, for all that, or I wish I may never spit white again," squirting the juice of a quid out of his mouth.

"Now, tell us, Jemmy, what sort of a looking man was Robinson Crusoe, because I've got his picture, Jemmy."

"Well, he was just so like his picture, that you couldn't tell one from the t'other."

"Now, is that all true, Jemmy, that the book you says of him?"

"I can't say as I believes all I read in them books, 'cause I've heard there is but one as is true from beginning to end; but I remember, now I come to think on it, that Rob told me he was a going to write his own history in a book."

This quite satisfied poor Johnny of the real autobiography of Robinson Crusoe ever after.

In this manner we used to wile away many an idle day in the same round of amusement; and now and then the monotony of the scene was varied by some company of strolling players at the inn; the wonderful performances of some conjuror, and the periodical visits of trampers, on their tours and excursions. But

whether these trampers appealed to the charitable, by thundering out with stentorian lungs, "The Bay of Bisky, oh!" or whined out a sermon in their behalf to the edification of all good Christian folks, or whether it were a woman blowing a cow's horn, to solicit alms, accompanied by three or four squalling brats, my uncle had strictly charged the constable to clap them into jail; and to the subject of my uncle I will now return, after this long interval of silence on him, in the forthcoming chapter.

CHAP. XVIII.

Trip to Brighton for the sake of my Aunt Maria's Health.

— How she and my Uncle spent their Time there. —

N. B. No Statistics of what it was then; or of what it is now. — My Half-guinea's worth of Pleasuring.

My aunt Maria possessed, in as perfect a degree as any of her mortal and imperfect fellow-creatures, the really desirable blessing of Juvenal's "*mens sana in corpore sano*" — that to be wished-for object, of a sane mind in a sane body. But, as it has often struck me, the same person at different times appears to have assumed, all of a sudden, a new character, and after a time relapses again into his former. *Varium et mutabile semper femina*, (woman is ever varying and changing); and as my aunt Maria was one of that sex, there is some excuse for the whim that now seized upon her. She thought that her health required the bracing effects of a month

or two of the sea breezes. My uncle, on her breaking the subject to him one day, about the middle of August, by hinting that Brighton was famous for the salubrity of its air, and that she had just received a letter from thence, from a particular friend of hers, to acquaint her of the astonishing good effect that the air and baths of Brighton had produced on her delicate state of health; and, observing aunt Maria's *embonpoint*, asked her if she ate, drank, or slept worse than usual.

"I don't know exactly—I scarcely know; but somehow I feel a sort of depression of spirits, a lowness, a nervous dejection—I don't know what—and I'm sure Brighton will do me good."

"You are quite sure, Maria, that Brighton will cure you of—the complaint of I don't know what's the matter with me."

"Oh, quite so," she answered, without being sensible to the sarcasm implied by the question; "then we shall go to Brighton—I knew you wouldn't refuse my request."

So, for this very sufficient reason my uncle was dragged along more than 200 miles of

turnpike road, to the queen of watering-places, and I, alas ! with them, wishing my aunt Maria where I shan't say ; my uncle insisted, however, that she should go all the way in a stage-coach, though she protested that she was not used to ride in a public conveyance. I omit the incidents of the journey.

The Castle Hotel at Brighton looked out then very pleasantly on the grass lawn of the Steine, 'twas as good in every point of view as any in England — at that time or since — and there we sojourned. My aunt speedily got rid of her vapours, and I suspect not more from sea air than from her invalid friend introducing her to the small circle of society that was now beginning to assemble here, particularly to the officers of the Horse Artillery, then stationed at Brighton. These officers were all handsomely dressed — that is something — and they were also perfect gentlemen. Three of them were as handsome men as the army contained, and had, on that account, been honoured by the ladies with fancy names, of which I recollect but two, namely, Love at first Sight, and Look

and Die. My aunt, then about thirty, was a handsome, fashionable-looking woman, and a very tolerable proficient in all the refinements and delicacies of the art of flirtation, and of very lively and agreeable manners in *good* society. She was, therefore, naturally, very popular with the officers of the Horse Artillery, and had every day at her daily walk on the Steine two or three or more at her side. This my uncle thought was so natural that he made no observation upon it, taking it, indeed, as a matter of course. One day, however, he thus began:—

“I’m glad to find, Maria, that the sea breezes seem to have restored you to quite your natural gaiety and spirits. And then a little flirtation now and then on the Steine with Colonel A., and Major B., and Captain C., is a fine restorative; but what the deuce can have forced you to swallow such a dose, as to laugh and chat with that ugly spindle-shanked fellow in plain clothes, upon whom I’ve often seen you of late exercising your woman’s fascinations, that vile specimen

of a watering-place beau, I cannot for the life of me imagine."

"La! papa, why you don't suppose any one flirts but for amusement?"

"Well, I don't suppose that you run much danger by flirting with such a mere ape of a man as that; but it don't do credit to your taste."

"Why, don't you know who he is?"

"Not I, more than I know of that poor idiot who walks up and down the Steine alone every day, in a green coat, and green waistcoat, and green breeches, whom they call the green man."

"Well, I shouldn't walk with him, but this is a man well known; he is not a lady-killer, to be sure, to judge him by the features or complexion of his face—and that he acknowledges; but then he has a look, an expression, which does the business in five minutes. Why, papa, have you been so long here and don't know the Gentle Assassin?"

"There's no fear," replied my uncle, "of his assassinating you."

He said this advisedly; for Aunt Maria, who

had once been jilted herself, had had her revenge on a good many admirers and humble swains since.

I am mindful of what I said many pages back, that my aunt Maria was an amiable and accomplished gentlewoman in all respects. Her amiability, however, was better exemplified in the country, where she superintended a school, and performed kindly offices to the poor; and her accomplishments more in the fashionable society of a place of fashionable resort. She was not exactly the same person in London, or at Brighton, that she was at Cock-a-Roost Hall. In the latter, her amiable qualities predominated, in the former places her accomplishments.

My uncle, meanwhile, found a few acquaintances to dine with him,—a convivial old fellow, something of a Sir John Falstaff; and another gentleman of the cloth, who was afterwards made a bishop, who used hospitality on a scale too large for his purse,—both friends of George IV.; and two or three other men who had mixed in the world, and had their stories

to tell of men and things,—my uncle repaying them with his anecdotes about his travels.

“I remember, Sir,” (thus he invariably began his stories,) “after a week passed at Granada, to examine the faded glories of the Moorish Alhambra there. We had reached that city from Seville, the hottest place in Spain.” Here my uncle had forgotten whatever he had intended to begin with, when he commenced with “I remember.” “Ah, Seville! Well may the Spaniards say, ‘*Quien no ha visto Sevilla, no ha visto maravilla!*’ but I won’t expatiate upon the leaning tower, of which there is another example at Pisa, in Italy, nor on the Moorish palace of the Alcazar, nor on many other things most worthy of note in that capital of Andalusia, but say a word or two, Sirs, about that grandest of all the Gothic churches in the world, the famous cathedral there.

“Imagine, gentlemen, an edifice, loftier I believe than any of our cathedrals, with gigantic pillars rising up to the very roof, and there branching off along the ceiling, like the

branches of some enormous oak—not that I mean to say there is an oak in the world that could measure in girth with one of these enormous stupendous columns, which rise, perhaps, to the height of 200 feet—ay, more than that, I dare swear, had I measured one of them. Now, Sirs, picture to yourselves this edifice, 400 feet long perhaps, with these columns stretching along like avenues of trees: but now, gentlemen, how shall I describe to you the glories of those painted windows, glowing in all their rich colours as the cloudless sun of Spain pours upon them the warm lustre of its evening beams! Now, my good Sir, pass the Val de Penes—I mean, the claret.

“Well, Sirs, I remember,” resuming what he had begun with, “that after leaving Granada in the diligencia with half a dozen guards with their blunderbusses perched on the roof of the carriage, we reached, in two days, after various incidents on the road, Madrid, which I shall not at present say a word about, with its Alamada of gigantic fountains, marble figures,

twenty or thirty feet high, and the colossal palace, without an inhabitant; and I pass over likewise the gridiron edifice of the Escorial, half a day's wild journey from Madrid, at the base of the rugged Guadarama mountains——”

“Dear Sir, won't you stay? Why, it's but a quarter to eleven.”

“Well, I remember, on our journey from Madrid to Zaragoza, I believe it was on the second day's journey, that the diligence was stopped by a stream across the road, over which there was no bridge.”

Here Samuel came in and announced tea. “All in good time,” said my uncle; “bring in another jug of claret.”

“Well, Sirs, when we came to this stream, in we plunged, and stuck in the middle. The mayoral, finding the case hopeless, began to swear and scratch his head. ‘Send to the next stage,’ I said, ‘for a relay of horses, and harness them to these poor tired animals, in order to get us out of this scrape.’ Well, we dismounted from the diligence, with the expectation of waiting there till the relay of horses arrived.

“ Now there was a hamlet in sight, on the other side of the stream in which the horses were imbedded, and thither we resolved to proceed, and there await the arrival of the fresh horses. But we had no mind to ford the stream. There was, however, a wooden trough about three feet wide, a rude kind of aqueduct, which had been thrown lengthways over the stream, about a hundred feet long, to convey water to a mill situate on the other side of the stream, with a path thence leading to the hamlet.”

“ D——, help yourself, and pass on the claret to the Reverend.”

“ Now as there was about a foot deep of running water in the trough, I engaged the services of a peasant, who stood hard by enjoying the novelty of the scene, to carry me through the trough for a few quartos, on his back. Well, Sirs, up I mounted on the man's back, but just as we got about half-way, the fellow was suddenly seized with such a fit of laughter (I had a long cloak on, which the current of air kept flapping against his sides), that feeling

him shaking and tottering beneath my embrace, and with expectation of our both tumbling together into the stream below, I slipped my hold and walked the rest of the way over ankles in water to the mill."

Thus my uncle would run on with his anecdotes till past midnight often, with D—— and the Reverend, for in their company, as long as wine was on the table, there was no fear of the house being counted out.

My uncle not being one of those, who have ever a gun on his shoulder and a brace of pointers before him, stayed at Brighton till the end of September. The end of October then terminated the season of the present *Londres sur la mer*, which could then lay claim to several things that it cannot now, and may now boast of a superabundance of things which it could not then.

It was a horrid dull place to me, this Brighton. I hadn't had one day what I call of pleasuring; but hearing that the blue-mottled harriers were to meet, the opening day of the season, two days before I was to return

to school, I resolved to hire a hunter at a livery stable. They were to meet at Bears-den, I think it was called, on the Downs. But I had spent all my money; so I went to our footman, Samuel, and asked him if he would lend me half a guinea, and I'd repay him out of the pocket-money I was to have on going to school.

“Well now, Master Easy, what's it for?”

“To hire a hunter for the harriers to-morrow.”

“No,” says he, “for then I shall be sure to have a job of brushing the mud off your trowsers. I've got enough to do here in *wal-letting* master and you, and waiting at table, without having that job.”

“Sammy, dear Sammy,” said I coaxingly, “the Downs are as clean as this carpet, and I'll brush my trowsers myself.”

“Well,” said he, “come up into my room with me, and we'll see what we can do.”

So up we went together, and Samuel, unlocking his deal box, produced his purse, a cast-off worsted stocking, which smelt rather

savoury of his feet, and emptying it, copper, silver, and gold, put into my hand a seven-shilling bit, two shillings, two sixpences, and six penny pieces; and off I ran to the stables, and secured my hunter for the following morning.

Now, though I had never yet mounted a hired ten-shilling high-bred Brighton hunter, I had acquired a good seat at school, by frequent rides on Dick Marton's donkeys, which he kept at the top of a hill, and then started you down the hill, with a thundering stroke of his stick on the animal's crupper and the sound of his voice, the animal often kicking the whole of the way, and no easy matter it was to sit him.

At the bottom, where he got beyond the hearing of his master's voice, he came to a stand-still, and no persuasion could urge him even to a walk. So in order to have our ride out, we used to turn his head, when he would, of his own accord, gallop back again up the hill. Dick would set him off again down the hill, and so went up, up, up, and down,

down, down, till we had had our shilling's worth out.

I awoke next morning in time, and long before, indeed; and, breakfast partly in hand and partly in my pocket, ran off to the stables, with but one unpleasant idea, namely, that I was not booted and spurred as became me. The master of the stables, a riding-master, I believe, and one of the primitives of that class at Brighton, had promised me (the horse then being out) one of the choicest horses in the whole town, and the best hunter in all the country, one as was perfectly steady, and knew his business. As I was a perfect stranger to him, he courteously reminded me that payment was expected in advance, to which I acceded.

“Jim,” he hallooed, “bring out the young gentleman's hunter. There's a beauty for you,” he said to me, as out came a huge, raw-boned animal, that looked as if it had had some twenty years', at least, experience to make him acquainted with his business. He was about sixteen hands high, so that I was obliged to have

the assistance of a chair, in order to get on the top of him.

Well, on starting, he seemed very gentle and quiet, even to sluggishness.

After asking the way to Bearsden of every shepherd that I could spy out on the Downs, I fortunately stumbled on three school-boys, who had got a holiday, and were going to see the hounds throw off, so that I reached the place in good time under their guidance. There might have been a dozen sportsmen collected, among whom appeared to me, worthy of notice, a short, square old gentleman, booted and spurred, with a blue spenser over his under-coat, and a velvet cap, tied round his chin, with a white handkerchief, in order to secure it against any sudden gust of wind. He accosted me very politely, said he knew my horse, eulogised him, and cautioned me, as I appeared to be a young hand, not to over-ride the hounds. His name I don't know; but everybody called him Doctor. He was a very gentlemanlike man, and was mounted on a real and noble-looking hunter.

A hare was soon found in the furze, was presently hallooed away, and off we set, but at no great pace, and turning and twisting about continually. The Doctor kept exclaiming how steadily the hounds did their work. My horse did his very steadily—it was evident that if I over-rode the pack it wouldn't be *his* fault. The hounds now began to increase their pace; they whisked and flourished their tails about, barked, howled, and bellowed louder and louder, and roared with delight as they flung their noses about and caught the scent; the huntsman blew his horn, and the Doctor shouted with enthusiasm. So well mounted, he led the field, and by the help of a ground-ash stick, I contrived to play a very creditable second to him, until, arriving at the top of a hill, down which my brother sportsmen galloped helter skelter, my steed suddenly halted, made three *pirouettes*, turned away from the hounds, snorted, put his head towards the ground, and set off in a gallop on his own errand, in defiance of all my tugs at his bridle. Suddenly he wheeled into a deep, ruddy, muddy

CHAP. XIX.

Journey in the Snow to Cock-a-Roost Hall. — Christmas-day at my Uncle's. — New Year's-day at Mr. Piecrust's. — Grand Preparations for Twelfth-day at Rooksnest Parsonage.

I HAD a disagreeable journey home in the year A.D. 1811 or 1812, for the Christmas holidays, by the mail. It snowed the entire night, and so thickly, that at day-break, being now sadly behind our time, we passed by several waggons and coaches that had been left on the road without horses, and with difficulty reached a village about two miles from Cirencester. Here the mail-coach could proceed no farther, and the mail-bags were sent on horseback. We arrived there about two o'clock in the afternoon, and were obliged to sleep that night at the inn; and a night it was for me! for, just opposite to my bed-room, stood the sign-post, the sign creaking the night

throughout, as it swung to and fro at the will of the tempestuous blast of a winter's night.

Next day I reached Gloucester; the following Hereford; and on the fourth, Shrewsbury; and thence on foot across the snow, for this road had not been dug out, over gates, hedges, and ditches, several feet beneath the snow, to Cock-a-Roost Hall, which I reached on the eve of Christmas-day.

That was a seasonable Christmas-day. "The milk was frozen in the pail, Hob blew his nail." Every spray was glittering with the hoar-frost; the sun shone forth in unclouded splendour; the keen atmosphere was clearer than it was in summer in our climate; the boys were sliding, or pelting each other with snow-balls.

It was a hospitable Christmas-day. Uncle Baillie, and Aunt Tabitha, and Mr. Allworth, and Johnny, and the little apothecary dined at the Hall. We had pea-soup, with a piece of bacon floating at the top — let not the epicure turn up his nose at it! — a noble round of beef;

a turkey, of course, with sausages; a leash of woodcocks, plum-pudding, and mince-pies. We played at "commerce" in the evening, and Johnny and myself, of course, won all the pools. It was a merry Christmas-day.

I have spent Christmas-day in various places, but every one appeared to me a melancholy one, except those which I have passed at a house in the country.

I have not forgotten Margery, the Doctor's sister, who would, of course, have been one of the party, had she not been absent on a six months' visit, and who returned by New Year's-day. Our whole family party dined on that day at Mr. Piecrust's, to even Johnny and myself. Twenty-four sat down to dinner, Mr. Piecrust's family consisting of Mrs. and two Misses Piecrust, unassuming and comfortable sort of persons to associate with, and his son, then placed at some private tutor or other, his father's darling and nobody's else. Here, for the first time in my life, I ate off silver, had my plate changed eleven times at dinner, and drank a whole glass of champagne, which

was at that time 16s. a bottle. The venison was carved at a side table, and made dishes were brought round every minute.

The dinner was over, and the ladies had retired; then the wine passed round, and the conversation began; and whatever topic it turned upon Mr. Piecrust took his full share in it. If on some extraordinary run with the Shrewsbury fox-hounds, — he had leapt every fence, and seen every fall: for the squire of Lombard Court often went out to *see* the hounds, and enjoy his chat with the whole field, until the run commenced in earnest. Then he returned home, taking care to have such a horse as would not compel him to see part of a run, by running away with him. When the sport began, his sport was over; and he always prayed, before he went out a-hunting, for a blank day. Whether it were this subject, therefore, or any other that came upon the carpet, it was all the same to him, who could rattle away about anything. With my uncle he talked about justice business; and then ensued a short argument upon the subject of

money fines, my uncle maintaining that they ought to be done away with altogether, for it was unjust for the same offence, committed by a rich or poor man, to impose the same fine, which to the former was a mere trifle, but to the poor man a most severe punishment, both to him and his family, and for which, if he were unable to pay, he was sent to prison. But as my uncle never argued long with lawyers, the subject soon dropped; and I remember no other that occurred worth mentioning. We returned home half an hour after the beginning of the new year.

There still remained the celebration of Twelfth-day to complete the round of Christmas festivities. My Aunt Tabitha, who had partaken of the grand display of cookery at Lombard Court, had got by heart one of the bills of fare that were laid upon the table, and formed the idea of emulating the new year's banquet by a banquet to be given on Twelfth-day. She and Margery both had a hand in the business of the kitchen.

"Divisum Imperium, cum Jove Cæsar habet."

But for such a dinner as this was to be, it required a real professor of the art,—a dinner, first-rate, for seventeen guests, viz. fourteen of them at the grand table, and the three boys, Master Piecrust, Johnny, and myself, at a side one. The Doctor, who was liberal in hospitality, and who had caught the flame that had lighted up the soul of his gentle partner, was for calling in the services of John of the “Black Swan” on this occasion.

The Doctor and Mrs. Baillie drove over to Shrewsbury, to hold a conference with John on the subject. He could set them out a better dinner, if they would leave it to him, than ever was set on Mr. Piecrust’s table; for the nobleman he had lived with was known to be the best dinner-giver in all London.

“You must have turtle, in course.”

“And, at least, a dozen of the best punch,” said his wife.

“A haunch of venison, in course.”

“A dozen of champagne,” said his wife, “at dinner.”

"What's champagne a bottle?" asked Mrs. Baillie.

"Eighteen shillings, such as I can give you," answered John, "not poor frothy stuff, but still champagne, and it ain't dear at the price."

"Nor cheap," exclaimed the Doctor and wife.

"We must have a Norfolk turkey," said John.

"And a Bayonne wild-boar's ham," said his wife.

"Now for made dishes. A *suprême de volaille aux truffes*."

"By all means," said Mrs. Baillie, fascinated with the name, but not knowing what it meant.

"*Rissolles*."

"You've forgotten," said his wife, "the lobster and the oyster patties."

"*Fricandeau vol-au-vent*," said John again.

"Bless me, John, you forgot the turbot in the first course; we can't dine without fish."

"Never mind," said the Doctor, "turtle is fish."

"That's as you please," said John, "but turtle ain't what I call neither fish, flesh, nor fowl. Then there's the game, wild cock, grouse, woodcocks."

"Then," said his wife, "the Fondu, the Macaroni, the Parmesan, the double Cottenham, and the Stilton."

"Then," said John, "the liqueurs after dinner; the Rosalio, Maraschino, and the Curaçoa."

"Then," continued his wife, "the cream and the water *Ices*."

"The pine-apples," added John; "the West India preserves."

"Enough, enough," said the Doctor.

"And not too much," cried John and his wife.

Here I put in my say, as I had been treated there with a ride on the coach-box by the Doctor. "Ain't we to have mince-pies, John?"

"Thank ye, my young master. Lord, what a poor head I've got! Yes, sure, and a noble trifle, and sweet omelettes, and plum-pudding.

Aye, I said thou wast a 'cute lad, and wouldst do credit to thy schooling."

"Aye," said his wife, "the young gentleman's a credit to his family."

"Now," said the Doctor, "what will you contract, John, to furnish such a dinner per head."

"Well," said John, "such a dinner, that's to say, including wine, would cost at the City of London Tavern five guineas a head;" and that was true at that time.

The Doctor and Mrs. Baillie lifted up their hands and eyes.

"Well now, Missus," said John to his wife, "let's make it out: write down turtle for seventeen, at five shillings a-head, five guineas."

"A dozen bottles of lime punch," said his wife, "flavoured with Curaçoa, six shillings a bottle,—three pounds twelve."

"Turbot," said John, "and lobster sauce, two guineas."

"A dozen of still champagne," said his wife "nine pounds sixteen shillings."

"Norfolk turkey, two guineas; Bayonne ham,

ditto;—and now for the made dishes. The chickens, the beef, the veal, and the mutton.”

“The sauces,” said the wife; “Harvey, soy, ketchup, anchovies, French truffles, Cayenne pepper.”

Then,” said John, “the Fondu, and the cheeses, and the sweets, my young master, and the liqueurs, and the ice, and the dessert. Well, lump it all together, I’ll furnish the dinner for two and a half guineas a-head.”

“And we shall lose money by it,” said the wife.

“And,” said John, “I must have five guineas for cooking it, and bringing the things over to your house.”

The Doctor and Tabitha were too much overwhelmed to enter into the calculation; they would consider of it, and send word to John in time.

They did consider of it long and anxiously. The ambition to cut out Mr. Piecrust prevailed over every other consideration. He and his family were invited; the party of seventeen made up.

CHAP. XX.

Twelfth-day Banquet at the Rectory.

OUR friend of the "Black Swan," having stood out against Aunt Tabitha for all the leavings of the banquet, so soon as he had ascertained that the party had been invited, arrived in his laden cart early on Twelfth-day.

The elder guests are all seated at the Doctor's table, and the three boys at the side one have much the best use of their elbows. Mr. Piecrust, without a shade of envy, declared this to be the best dinner he had ever sat down to, not even excepting the lord mayor's at the Mansion House. The banquet began at six, lasted till half-past eight, and the ladies retired at nine. Then my uncle opened fire on various topics.

"You were just now praising, Mr. Piecrust, the hospitable doctor's dinner, and extolling it above the lord mayor's feast. Do you re-

member how well Paley brings a Lord Mayor's dinner in, when explaining the use of the epiglottis, that little membrane, which, like a lid, protects the windpipe as we swallow, from the food passing into it——”

“Yes, yes,” replied Piecrust.

“Which must open every second to allow us to breathe, and into which if a crumb enter, it causes a violent convulsion. Yet observe,” continues Paley, “how well this little lid does its office. At a Lord Mayor's feast, what deglutition, what anhelation, as morsel after morsel, and draught after draught are coursed down the gullet. And yet so well does the epiglottis do its office, that not two guests are choked in a century!”

“Ha! ha! ha! I remember. What a capital joke on a Lord Mayor's dinner! Ay, Paley was a witty fellow.”

“And much more. His ‘Theology,’ in one volume of less than 300 pages, Mr. Piecrust, contains more valuable knowledge than that which is comprised in twenty times the compass of any other book. There's scarce

a sentence in it but it is worth getting it by heart."

"Just so," said Mr. Piecrust; "but that ain't a bad thing of Sheridan's, his 'School for Scandal.'"

"Well, Sir," my uncle answered (as if he were Dr. Johnson himself) "not a bad, but a very good thing, in point of wit and language; but there's no moral depth in it, as there is in Molière's 'Misanthrope,' 'Tartuffe,' and 'Avare,'—and certainly much morality could not be expected from the man. I am aware that he spouted out morality in his splendid speeches against Warren Hastings; but it came only from the mouth. He was merely acting his part, for applause, and laughing all the time in his sleeve."

"Sherry," said Mr. Piecrust, "is the most talented man living."

"Well, Sir, I admire his talents, but I appreciate the man according to the way in which he uses them."

He then began on the superiority of the French to the English comedy, thence to the

inferiority of the French tragic writers to Shakspeare, thence to the difference between a French and an English audience at the theatre.

“It has often surprised me,” he observed, “to see this volatile people, even down to the driver of a fiacre, (our hackney coachman), sitting through a tragedy of Racine, with all the lengthy speeches, in rapt attention during the whole performance; and a French audience *is* attentive; for it seizes instantaneously a good passage, either in tragedy or comedy, and applauds instantaneously. The applause lasts not half a minute, but it is hearty and unanimous. An English audience is slow in discerning the merit of any passage, and then begins to applaud in a lengthened dropping irregular fire.”

I doubt if any of the party but myself remember a word he said of all this. Mr. Picrust, in order to stop him, asked him what he thought of the venison.

“Excellent! As good as the wild venison that I dined on once at Blair Athol, in Scotland, for

which, together with grouse, the innkeeper charged us eighteenpence a head."

At this the doctor looked rather black, and told his father-in-law to pass the wine to his neighbour. Now I am positively certain that my uncle meant nothing by this but to praise his son-in-law's venison; but the Doctor thought otherwise, and indeed most of the party could not help smiling at something or other that struck their fancy. One must talk very guardedly indeed, so as not to be sometimes misunderstood.

"I suppose, Mr. Easy," said a gentleman, who was perpetually worrying the bench with poachers, and was avaricious of stocking his estate with game, as a miser of filling his money bags, "you went to Blair Athol to shoot wild deer in the duke's preserves."

"No, Sir, I did not go there armed with a fowling-piece against bird and beast, but to stretch forth the hand of fellowship to the noble highland man."

"With bare legs and feet," said the game preserver.

“Yes, Sir, without a clumsy iron-heeled shoe on each foot to carry, distorting and emaciating his legs, taken off wet when he went to bed at night and not dry by the morning. The country people in the Netherlands manage their feet still better, putting on a pair of light wooden shoes to work in the fields, and pulling them off on their return to the farm-house. As to our shoemakers, especially in London, they are all in league with the corn doctors. I have mine made by our Rooknest cobbler. Now the Spanish peasantry wear sandals.”

“Because its a *sandy* country — ha! ha! ha!” said Mr. Piecrust, aiming at a pun.

“No, Sir; there is no part of Spain so sandy as that vast plain in France, extending from Bordeaux to the Pyrenees, and there the peasantry walk on stilts.”

“Then,” said Mr. Piecrust, “one must *look up* to the peasantry.”

“Of the *Landes*,” said my uncle, “for so this part of France is named.”

With these gleanings of my uncle’s conver-

sation on Twelfth-day, I shall conclude. Mr. Piecrust, when we joined the ladies in the drawing-room, indulged himself with a little innocent raillery with Margery, about the number of her swains and admirers in bygone days, and with such tact, that she declared that he was the most agreeable, well-bred gentleman that she had ever met with, and by the bye, she told me in confidence (for she was a great friend of mine), that John of the "Black Swan," who was to sleep that night after his labours at the Rectory, on seeking his early bedroom, being somewhat in liquor, and very fatigued, had popped by mistake into the doctor's room, where Tabitha, about one o'clock in the morning, who always looked under the bed for safety, found him reposing undressed on the bed. Away she ran down screaming, dropped the candle, and told the doctor there was a thief in his bedroom. The footman, blunderbuss in hand, ascended the stairs on tiptoe, followed by his master. John was awakened by its rusty barrel end tickling his nose, and shouted murder! and so ended that memorable Twelfth-day at the Rectory.

CHAP. XXI.

We pass Easter in London. — What my Uncle took me there to see.

I PASSED the Easter holidays this year in London, my uncle having hired a house in Welbeck Street, Cavendish Square, for the season, at that time within a short walk of the fields. In the course of my fortnight's holidays, we went to see John Kemble and Mrs. Siddons in *Macbeth*; and John Kemble, Charles Kemble, and Young in *Julius Cæsar*. I see Kemble, as I now write his name, that is, "in my mind's eye, Horatio," staggering in after the murder of his host, ghastly and horror-stricken, whispering, but in a whisper faint but distinct, so that it reached every ear, "I've done the deed;" and Mrs. Siddons, when *Macbeth* dares not return into the chamber "to gild the faces of the grooms" with blood, exclaiming, "Give *me* the *dagger*!"

In the play of Julius Cæsar, with its three great characters of Brutus, Cassius, and Antony, John Kemble, Young, and C. Kemble rivalled one another. I have since seen Kean, in his masterpiece of acting, Richard III. How the whole pit to a man rose and waived their hats when he shouted, "Off with his head! so much — for — Buckingham!" I have since seen Talma in French tragedy, a greater actor even than them, excepting always Mrs. Siddons, who was sublime. The bust of Talma was perfect,—such a noble head and countenance, a neck so finely formed, such shoulders, and such a chest; his voice was so fine, and his enunciation so correct, and his action so commanding, dignified, and so easy.

My uncle took me one day to the Exhibition in Somerset House. After a cursory glance at the portraits, he, — wondering that so many ugly and vulgar countenances should have had the face to present themselves to public exhibition,—stopped opposite a landscape: "This is one," he said, "of the mysterious Turner's, that 'come like shadows, so depart'—the man who

blotches out a mere sketch of something in his fanciful head, and leaves it to the imagination to make out the rest. If that self-conceited fellow were engaged by John to paint him a sign-post to his inn, I would advise him not to pay a halfpenny till he had made out clearly a black swan."

Perhaps some may remember the last child of Turner's old age in the National Gallery, and the derision it occasioned. It was, without exaggeration, the picture of some bedlamite. "Poor old man," everybody said, "has he no friend to advise him not to expose himself?"—but the poor old man died rich.

Of all our landscape painters, my uncle preferred Gainsborough, who painted English rural scenes so faithfully. Wilson he thought but a clumsy imitator of the great Claude Lorraine. He could not comprehend how Sir Joshua Reynolds could so contemptuously speak of a landscape painter, as to call his art the mere trickery of a conjuror. Perhaps he lived entirely in London, and knew no more of the country than from a description of it in books.

On quitting Somerset House, we crossed over to the other side of the way; and in a few minutes after, came to Exeter Change, before which stood a man in the gold and scarlet uniform of the beef-eater, who invited us in to see the wild hanimals. "Not for the world," said my uncle, "will I enter that foul den of wild beasts. I smell more than enough of them outside."

"Come along, Bob." We turned up towards Leicester Fields, to visit Seringapatam, the capture of which was then displayed at the panorama. On entering Leicester Fields, "Here," he said, "is the only French hotel that I know of in London, Bruné's; which puts me in mind of an anecdote related to me by a very agreeable man I happened to meet at the table d'hôte of an excellent hotel in the pleasant town of Utrecht. "Ah!" said he, "you English are a very intelligent nation. Even the hackney-coachmen and the link-boys know what you want, and what you say, without your speaking English to them. I could not speak one word when I visited your famous town of London.

Well, the second day after my arrival there, I went with my good friends, Lord and Lady Jersey, *ah! qu'ils sont aimables!* about half-past ten at night, to your famous Vauxhall Gardens, and, *par malheur*, while I was standing to admire the dancing of what you call your cockneys, the London bourgeois, I missed my party. Well, it was very late, and the lamps were beginning to go out one by one, and among all the crowd I could not find a soul that understood French. The people were leaving the gardens, and I followed the throng out. But how to get to my hotel! I do suppose it was three miles off, and I had forgotten the name of it, and the name of the street. Well, I could not speak one word of English, and there I stood, when one of your link-boys with his torch came up to me, and said, 'Coach, your honour?'"—that is, I told my foreign friend, who didn't comprehend what the link-boy had said, that this must have been what he *did* say. "Well," he continued, "I touched my hat to the link-boy, which he understood, as I had

meant it, to say yes. He got me a hackney-coach, said a word to the driver, and helped me in. The coach set off, but where it would put me down I could not imagine. *Concevez-vous, Monsieur*, my joy when it put me down at Bruné's hotel, Leicester Fields, the very one I was lodging at!"

One morning at breakfast I said to the governor, "What sight, Sir, will you be so kind as to treat me to to-day?"

"To none."

"You shall go shopping with me, then," said my Aunt Maria.

I said, "Thank you, aunt," though I had no mind to stay half an hour in a shop just to see my aunt tumble over bonnets and shawls, and bargain down the shopman, with all the modest effrontery of a fashionable lady.

"I am going not to a place of recreation to-day," said my uncle.

"Well, Sir, go where you will, let me accompany you."

Anything was preferable, I thought, to the ennui to which my aunt had invited me.

“Your nerves are not equal to the spectacle I am going to witness.”

This so stimulated my curiosity, that I determined to dodge him all the way, to see where he was going. I made another effort, however, to obtain leave to accompany him. “What man dare, I dare,” I replied, knowing how acceptable to him any quotation from Shakspeare always was.

“Then you shall go with me ;” and, ringing the bell, he ordered a hackney-coach ; and as soon as it drove up to the door,—“And now,” he said, “come on, Macduff.” To the driver of the coach he said, “To the Elephant and Castle,” though he intended to get out before arriving there, for he thought the man might stare at him suspiciously, if he mentioned the place he really intended to visit.

In about ten minutes or more after we had passed Westminster Bridge, the check-string was pulled, and we got out, my uncle saying that he would walk the rest of the way. We walked about ten minutes more,

and arrived at an iron railing, enclosing a large court-yard, at the extremity of which stood an immense gloomy pile of building: we ascended a flight of steps to the door. My uncle rung the bell, and presented to the porter who opened the door a ticket of admission.

“Now,” said he gravely to me, “this is Bedlam; if your nerves are not equal to it, return home.”

“Sir,” said the porter, “holiday folks used to come here once to amuse themselves, and it really was *then* a horrible place; but things are changed now, the young gentleman may bear it very well.”

We followed the Committee of Management, preceded by Lord Robert Seymour, their chairman, along the different wards, up and down which the patients were promenading, one asking us for a pinch of snuff, and another confidentially whispering to us that though confined there he was not mad; but a continual restlessness of the eye showed insanity in all, though in most instances little more. On entering the quarter, which was sur-

rounded by an iron grating, of those who had either attempted or committed murder, we saw a woman with her back against the wall, howling incessantly, occasionally exclaiming, "Were my sins as red as scarlet!" She had committed infanticide. Then an old woman, perfectly quiet, was pointed out to us, who had attempted the life of George the Third, Peg Nicholson; and Harvey, who had likewise attempted the same, but who had no appearance of insanity about his manner, and was perfectly sane in other respects. These and many others, the criminal lunatics, mixed with each other. But there was one cell, with an iron grating round it, that had but one occupant, a dangerous maniac of extraordinary strength, half clothed, for he tore his clothes from off him, with his hair twisted with straw, which he had done with his own hands, to crown his head, as King of Persia, which he fancied himself to be. Furious as he generally was, and particularly at the sight of Harvey, for whom, for some reason or other,

he had conceived a deadly hatred,— Lord Robert Seymour entered his cell alone, sat down by him on his couch, and was welcomed as a friend. And here I conclude this melancholy subject, earnestly hoping that a second Lord Robert Seymour may now watch over the unfortunate patients of Bethlehem Hospital, and that we may have no more of that which occurred there, some five years since, under the superintendence of one, who was so different in every respect to that benevolent nobleman.

CHAP. XXII.

A bad Specimen of an extempore Preacher.—Fashionables of Bond Street and St. James's Street.—Hyde Park and its Equipages.—Promenades and Equestrians.—Fashionable Tradesmen.—Coffee-houses.—The Finish in Covent Garden.—Inns of Travellers.—The Mail Coach Procession on Royal Birth-day.—Author incompetent to judge between London, as it was fifty years back, and what it is now.

A LONDON Sunday at the West End was passed at that time in much the same manner as at present: there were two or three popular preachers, for the excitement of the fashionable world; and, at my aunt's request, we attended one Sunday a chapel in Conduit Street, where one of these gentlemen preached extempore, attracting such crowded audiences, that it was as difficult to get a seat there as in the pit of Covent Garden Theatre, when Kean, some years later, played Richard the Third. On coming out of the chapel at the end of the service, among the crowd of miserable sinners

in silks and satins,—for there were but few of the male sex present, — my aunt asked her father what he thought of the preacher.

“Very differently,” he replied, “from what he thinks of himself, I am certain. I think him a very stupid conceited fellow, to attempt an extempore discourse. Had he given himself the trouble to write out such a sermon as he has given us, and, further, to read it after he had written it, he would have blotted out, at the least, three-fourths of what was but a repetition in almost the same words of the same idea. But even had there been any matter in his sermon, I should have been disgusted with his manner of delivering it, spinning as he did round the pulpit, like a tee-totum set a whirling, like a mountebank playing antics, and ever and anon smiting his desk with clenched fist, reminding me of the opening lines of Hudibras,

‘When pulpit, drum ecclesiastic,
Was beat with fist instead of a stick.’

And ‘these are thy gods, O Israel!’ These are what you fine ladies call fine preachers.

Had there been a short-hand writer to report the discourse, and send a copy of it afterwards to Mr. Extempore, I think he must have had modesty enough to have been ashamed of his half-hour's tautology. I mean, however, to say not a word against extempore preaching, where the man has the talent and sense to do it properly."

This lecture made more impression on my aunt than even the sermon had done.

In the London of fifty years back, fashion was quite as much studied as now, and if not more, it was certainly more exclusive and tyrannical. A man must have had some courage, however he affected to scorn it, who could walk down Bond Street and St. James' Street with ill-cleaned top-boots or Hessians, from half-past two to half-past four in the afternoon, among the well turned-out Beau Brummell, T—— R——, the city dandy, as he was called; Cupid W——e; Pea-green H——e, the Golden Ball; the fat Norfolk man of the turf, Delmé Ratchiff; Tea-pot of the Guards, with his brother Tea-kettle,

the former as handsome, and naturally fashionable a fellow as any in town; Prince Lascelles, and many more pointed out to me by my uncle among the pedestrians, the Bond Street bucks, or bloods, as Paddy calls them, not in derision, but in admiration. Sir Thomas Stepney alone was independent enough to dress his legs in blue striped silk stockings. Then there was Sir Harry Peyton, in blue coat and metal buttons, leathers and top-boots, driving his four greys; and Buxton, an admirable whip; and old withered white-hat Q—— in his *vis-à-vis*; and lastly, Romeo Coates, in a curricule formed according to the pattern of a large shell, and painted with various devices. Romeo Coates, a particularly ugly man, whose figure was nothing but a collection of sharp angles, had played, as an amateur, the part of Romeo at Covent Garden, till he had been laughed off the stage, and now enacted another ludicrous part in his curricule in Hyde Park. He and the green man at Brighton were two equal celebrities, “*par nobile fratrum.*”

There was then but one tailor in London,

Stultz; but one boot-maker, Hoby; but I believe there were two hat-makers. Certainly there was but one hair-cutter, just opposite the upper end of the Burlington Arcade, to whom I was once fool enough to pay half a guinea to turn me out a fashionable crop. Nobody then went to the Opera till nine o'clock; and though Catalani and Tramezzani were the stars, people were then too genteel to clap their hands together, except very gently; you paid half a guinea for a seat in the pit, where there was always plenty of room to escape a long recitative, and take a lounge behind the scenes. The men in the pit were nearly all men of fashion, and the ladies, ladies of fashion.

In Hyde Park, at five o'clock, a string of carriages, all and each equipped in the highest style of fashion, paraded up and down from Piccadilly to the Grosvenor Gate; ladies left their carriages to parade on the greensward, and Lord F — e and Jack F — r were always to be seen there, by the side of Harriet W — n, and the three daughters of the great horse-dealer of that time. The equestrians in

the park, in number about one-twentieth of that seen there now, had all an aristocratical bearing about them, — *distingués*; and Kensington Gardens, when a band played there occasionally, presented such a select few as were to be seen in the round room at the opera, at the end of the night.

There were then but four clubs, all in St. James' Street, but little frequented for dining. There were but two coffee-rooms carpeted, the Piazza, and the St. Albans, the rest having sanded floors. At the first-named, the Duke of Norfolk very often dined at a small table at the upper end. Old Harry was the head waiter, and brought you, if he knew you, a bottle of the finest sherry, for which you, of course, and very justly, paid money's worth.

The fashionable coffee-house of the London thieves—that is, of the respectable ones—who, in consideration of the Bow Street officers not molesting them, always gave themselves up to them when called upon, was the "Finish" in Covent Garden; twelve at night was the earliest hour at which they assembled there, and

you could not enter without a tap at the door, when it was opened by Mother —, I forget her name, and who, if she thought you respectable enough for her society, would admit you. A most robust lady she was, and so powerful, both by the eloquence of her tongue and the weight of her fist, as to keep all her company on their good behaviour. I saw her, the night that I attended her *soirée*, aim a blow at one of her visitors, which he luckily shirked, for the blow cracked the panel of a door against which it struck. Strange to say, there was a learned man, who was nightly to be found in the *Finish*; an elderly man in a thread-bare black coat, Doctor Boyce. He was no pedant, but a man of general information, and one to be pitied as he sat with his liquor before him, the butt of the room, or rather den, I may call it.

The inns where travellers stopped at that time, were the *Saracen's Head* on *Snow Hill*, the *White Horse* in *Fetter Lane*, and the *Golden Cross*, *Charing Cross*, very unpleasant places for a night's lodging in a winter's night,

as your bedroom opened upon an open railed wooden outside gallery, overhanging the court yard, where coaches were loading and unloading.

As there was some departure from three o'clock in the morning, and every succeeding hour till nine, if you ordered Boots to call you at eight, he would thunder at your door at three, four, five, six, and seven o'clock, successively, to awake you in good time. Indeed it was not to be supposed that with thirty or forty travellers, he could carry in his head at what different hour each had ordered him to awake them: so he called them, unless the bedroom door showed that the bird had flown, to the last that remained. Thus you had the satisfaction of learning every hour as it passed on, as regularly as by the chimes of a town clock, or the cries of the watchman. As you left your boots in the coffee-room, to be cleaned ready for the morning, and mounted to your bedroom in a greasy pair of slippers, you found them there again at breakfast time, amongst a whole row of them stuck round the coffee-

room, with perhaps one of your own and another of some one of your neighbours to match it, and you might have a bedroom immediately under the cockloft, where all these boots were being brushed.

Passing without any connecting link between one thing and another on the subject, the prettiest sight in London at that time was the procession of the mail coaches on the royal birthday. They started from the Post-office, and proceeded down Cornhill and the Strand, to the White Horse Cellar, Piccadilly, to the number of, I think, twenty-four, where the coachmen and the guards drank the king's health. They wore their new liveries, with nose-gays in their button-holes; and the insides of the coaches were filled with their sweet-hearts during the procession. The teams of horses were most of them very handsome. The Portsmouth was drawn by four fine powerful chestnuts, and the Exeter by four piebalds. There was such hurrying and scurrying to and fro, to find which way they were coming! for they did not always turn up the same streets.

to Piccadilly ; and one half of London was in motion on that afternoon.

I suppose that that half of London did not amount to one quarter of the present. Old Cobbett, however, grumbling forth every week from his farm in Hants, denounced it as the great *wen*, the huge Babylon, that was drawing everything to itself. "As splenetic as dog distract, or monkey sick," old Cobbett could not arrest the march of events. He might as well have bellowed against the tide coming in, or against the wind that "bloweth where it listeth." Which London may be the preferable, that of fifty years ago or that which now is, into such a comparison I have not attempted to enter. It would have required great knowledge, vast and various, to have performed such a task. Then, how could any one who has passed the hey-day of his youth in the London that was, and the autumn and winter of life in that which is, strike the just balance between the two ?

CHAP. XXIII.

A few Lines about Harrow. — The Head Master. —
A memorable Speech Day.

At the end of the Easter holidays, my uncle took me back himself to Harrow, at that time a village, much the same as he had remembered it. Passing through it, and ascending the hill towards the church, whose steeple is seen for many a mile around, we stopped at my boarding-house, kept by a worthy Welsh gentleman, somewhat hot in temper, and not particular about the age of his coat, and who, with several peculiarities that rendered him quite an original, was a sincere open-hearted man, of whom some droll stories might be related without one to his discredit. By his dear Patty, a kind and estimable lady, he had no family, and surely if he had, he could not have treated them more kindly

than he used to behave towards us, often saving us from a flogging, such as for driving a donkey tandem, &c.; and getting us leave to accompany him in a walk to Pinner, or to Wembly, or to some farm-house in that pleasant country around Harrow.

Even at the first sight of each other, he and my uncle, who was a bit of an original as well as himself, seemed quite, as it were, old friends; and on parting, my uncle gave him such a grip of the hand as he bestowed on very few.

My uncle then proceeded to pay his respects to the head-master.

There are few, I believe, who with my uncle would not have acknowledged, that in paying their respects to him they stood in the presence of a very superior man, who was in all points fully qualified for such a charge as that of head-master of an English public school.

There were greater Greek scholars, as Dr. Parr, or Porson, but none who combined more than himself the mind and manners of a perfect gentleman, and the art of commanding

respect and obedience, by wisely temporising with trifling matters, and exhibiting firmness and resolution where the case required such qualities. We took offence there, I remember once, at something or nothing; chalked up on the oak wainscot of the school-room, "To your tents, O Israel!"—and kept to our tents when the masters had gone up to school, and were waiting our attendance.

The mutiny lasted a day; and on the morrow we returned to duty, and being all assembled in the school-room, received such an harangue, so commanding and dignified, both in expression and the tone and manner in which it was delivered, as quickly awed and shamed us into reason.

The first speech day this year is memorable. A late Premier, and no ordinary one, delivered the speech out of the *Æneid*, beginning, "Larga quidem Drances," &c., to admiration, in the sarcastic tone which suited it: and a late poet, so famed in his days, the speech of King Lear, "Blow, winds, and crack your

cheeks," &c. They were each the best speakers I remember at school.

I have since, however, heard with far greater pleasure the present illustrious Premier speak after a Harrow dinner, not from Virgil or from Shakspeare, but from himself.

CHAP. XXIV.

My Uncle's Ideas about Comets — About Doctors. — Glorious News. — His and Mr. Allworth's dialogue about the Aspirants to Universal Dominion.

THE summer of the year One thousand, &c., that in which a famous comet gave its name to all wines for many years after (hence the precise date of that year may readily be ascertained), silenced those wise croakers who asserted that the seasons were quite changed, as it proved as hot a summer as ever they had recollected in their school-boy days.

“People,” said my uncle, “give this comet all the credit for this fine summer. Now, I don't see how the comet can have anything to do with it, seeing that it comes from the very extremity of the solar system, from whence it could have brought us no more heat than an iceberg from the polar regions, if as much. It may, perhaps, acquire heat

from the sun on its near approach to that focus of heat, if it be a body of such density as to absorb heat, and as it approaches our earth may give it out to us. 'Tis just possible that comets may have something to do with our temperature. We are much in the dark on the subject of these strangers that shed light upon us, but impart little into us. Are they messengers despatched by Saturn, Neptune, and the further planets of our system, to borrow heat from the sun, with which they return post-haste to those planets? However the matter may be, let us rejoice in this fine summer, and this fine harvest after the preceding bad ones. Bravely have our people borne them, and the 10 per cent. income tax and other burthens. And then that they should be taunted with an 'ignorant impatience of a relaxation of taxation!' And what soldiers they are now proving themselves in Spain, and what a General is vouchsafed to us! Marlborough beat some of the worst marshals of Louis XIV., but Wellington is beating the best of Napoleon's."

“I am not quite sure of that,” said the little doctor, who now put in a word. “He ought to have rested longer in his stronghold, instead of following Massena over an exhausted country, whom he will, perhaps, find intrenched in some Torres Vedras of his own.”

“No,” replied my uncle, “no ready-made Torres Vedras in Spain. Wellington will come up with him, and beat him in the open field:—but how did you find Dolly, the cook?”

“I’ll send her something presently; she must keep her bed some time.”

“Then pray, Doctor, don’t let me detain you a moment longer.”

“A good little fellow,” he said, after the apothecary had left the room,—“though I thought a hint about attending to the cook necessary,—and knows his business very fairly, too; at all events, he has no crotchets in his head. The little fellow don’t press your right side, and say, ‘Sir, your liver is affected. We must salivate you. Have you read my treatise on Stomach Complaints?’”

“‘Oh! yes, Doctor.’

“‘You remember, then, what I have said in page 53?’

“‘I can’t say, Sir, I exactly remember each page of your work.’

“‘Then what the devil is the use of your reading it? Now, hush, hush, hold your tongue, Sir.’

“Another doctor restricts you to half a cup of tea at breakfast, and half a glass of beer at dinner, for your indigestion. A third prescribes innocent doses of mustard-seed. A fourth claps the burning shirt of Nessus on your back,—his kill-or-cure blister. Several of the faculty are literally Monomaniasts. Thank Heaven, our little doctor still retains his reason!”

At this moment Mr. Allworth hurried into the room almost abruptly: “My dear Sir,” he exclaimed, “I come to congratulate you on this glorious news.”

“What news?” cried my uncle, starting up, “the Times ain’t yet brought up to me.”

“Marmont has lost his arm, is utterly

defeated; all the baggage of the French army has been captured, even to King Joseph's travelling carriage; and the remnant of the late French army is scouring away to the Pyrenees, to the cry of *Sauve qui peut!*"

"Victoria!" shouted my uncle.

"Vittoria is the very name of the place where the battle was fought," said the curate.

"Huzza!" shouted my uncle; "that's the very way I said it would turn out."

"'Tis the beginning of the end, Mr. Easy," said the curate; "it is the house built on the sand, that is now giving way. All Europe will now rise against the man that dreamt of universal conquest; even that sluggish government of Spain must now be roused to action."

"Ay, in Spain the higher you go the worse you find them. But the guerillas will do their work on the retreating foe, and we shall soon overleap the Pyrenees."

"And the man that shook the earth with the breath of his nostrils shall fall like Lucifer."

"He shall, Mr. Allworth; and if he has ever

read Juvenal, shall think of Solon's warning to Cræsus,

'Et Cræsum, quem vox justi facunda Solonis,
Respicere ad longæ jussit spatia ultima vitæ:'

and the *carcer et exilium* of Marius, and how he sat begging his bread amid the ruins of Carthage."

"And how his former rival, Sylla, laid down the sceptre of the Roman world. And how Charles XII. of Sweden fell far from his country, by an unknown hand; and Alexander, whose sepulchre is unknown, amid the plains of India. And how Julius Cæsar was assassinated in the very midst of his senate."

"Quid Crassos," said my uncle, "quid Pompeios evertit,
et ILLUM,
Ad sua qui domitos deduxit fræna Quirites?
Summus nempe locus, nullâ non arte petitus,
Magnaque Numinibus vota exaudita malignis."

"And Louis XIV.," continued the curate, "had better have died on some field of battle, where so many of his soldiers had died for *his* glory."

"But that grand monarch," said my uncle,

contemptuously, "could never face anything more serious than a review. And now, Allworth, with the permission of your rector, and with your approval, we'll light up such a blazing bonfire to-morrow night, on our village green, as shall shine far round the country."

That afternoon the curate and his pupil dined at the Hall. We all stood up, after dinner, and toasted Wellington and his victorious army. Samuel was ordered to drink the same toast in the servants' hall, in port wine, and to give the pledge to all incomers, except vagrants — a trifle, perhaps, to be mentioned, but one that does more honour to my uncle's memory than those *friendly* tales told of Samuel Johnson: — how he sat to his plate with such voracity that the water streamed from his eyes, though he declared that he was never hungry but once in his life; and how he told a worthy lady at whose table he was dining, that her cookery was all very well, but not exactly that refined cookery which was to be found at the tables of the great. This was his biographer, Bozzy, who fastened

himself to the trunk of that sturdy, venerable old oak.

“How,” said the curate, during the conversation that ensued, “can Parliament sufficiently honour this illustrious man, who has formed his army himself, and patiently struggled against the imbecility and jealousy of that wretched government of Spain? You remember, Mr. Easy, that the Roman senate publicly thanked their rash and defeated general after the battle of Cannæ, because he had not despaired of the fortunes of his country.”

“Now, Heaven be praised,” replied my uncle, “that we have no Sempronius to thank, but a second Fabius in discretion, and a hero in everything!”

CHAP. XXV.

My Uncle catches Cold at the Bonfire in honour of the glorious News.—How it affected him; and how he got rid of his Lumbago.

THAT battle of Vittoria was celebrated by a fête at Vauxhall. Tickets of admission were not very easily procured; yet such was the crowd, that the lines of carriages commenced at Charing Cross. But of this grand fête I can only remember, that Sontag's exquisite voice was the delight of the ear, and Miss Fitz-Clarence the great attraction of the eye. But to return to Rooksnest: the squire caught a bad lumbago that night of the bonfire. Next morning he could not dress himself, and, as he would not let anybody help him, was forced to keep his bed and have his breakfast brought up to him; and began scolding my aunt Maria, who carried it up herself, because the tea was

first too weak, and then too strong. Samuel durst not enter his room, and I was afraid, lest he should fall foul of me. He managed, however, about noon, to put on his clothes. As to shaving, he declared he would leave it off, for nature would not have bestowed a beard on him without some good reason for it. At last he managed to huddle on his clothes. Down he went to his study, tried to read, would neither take any medicine nor send for the little doctor; and when Maria tapped at his door, hallooed out, "Who's there?" and when she entered, bade her not disturb him again; and a quarter of an hour after rang the bell for her, and scolded her for neglecting him; then began abusing the whole parish, said he was sick of wasting life in such a stupid uncivilised place, wished himself at Jaffa again, squabbling with a mob of Arabs for mules and horses to carry him and his fellow-travellers to Jerusalem — or at the flea-bitten convent of Arimathea, half way to the Holy City, trying there to find out his inn, among its windowless dead walls, or entering by mistake the gateway of the mosque

of Omar, bastinadoed by a mule driver, pelted with stones by boys, and running for his life. He wished himself performing quarantine in Malta harbour, or in the Medway. He put on his hat and went out, but the wind blew his hat off, and he saw it skurrying along before him. It stopped for a moment, but just as he stooped, with much pain in his loins, to seize it, the current swayed the runaway to the right, then again to the left, dodging him in the most provoking twistings and turnings, till he was forced to return without it.

Again he returned to his study, where the minutes lingered like hours. He could not read nor think; there was not a soul in the house that could amuse him. The lumbago was as nothing to the ennui that bedevilled him. At last he bethought himself of sending for Jemmy, to tell him something about his voyages. Now Jemmy was busy in constructing a three-decker for Johnny, but as soon as he heard that the Squire wanted to speak

with him, he put a fresh quid in his jaw, and went up to the Hall.

As I was the messenger on that errand, I put Jemmy up to the service he was to perform to my uncle; namely, to tell him such stories as should laugh the blue devils out of him.

“Never fear,” said Jemmy. “Now, look at the figure-head on my bulk-head,”—as he put on such a droll face as would have done credit even to Mathews.

Well, smothering my inclination to laugh to the utmost, I brought Jemmy into my uncle’s study. As he stood scraping his foot, he was desired to seat himself.

“Saving your honour’s presence,” he said, “I don’t care if I bring up awhile in this easy berth,”—seating himself quite at home in an arm-chair. “Sorry to see that your honour’s brought up with the lumbago. It ain’t a pleasant comrade, and the sooner you part company with it the better; it ain’t quite so bad, neither, as the cat at your back. Well, I’ll tell your honour how I served it once,

when it scraped acquaintance with me in the Mediterranean. The captain, seeing as I was an idle hand, because I couldn't do nothing, sent the surgeon to overhaul me.

“‘Now, out with your tongue,’ says he. ‘The lumbago ain’t in my tongue,’ says I. ‘Now,’ says he, ‘let me feel your pulse.’—‘Nor it ain’t there,’ says I.—‘I know where it is,’ says he, ‘as well as you.’—‘I wish you did,’ says I.—‘Now,’ says he, ‘you’ll take a black pill to-night, and a blue dose in the morning.’—‘No, my noble,’ says I to myself, ‘I ain’t agoing to swallow your nastiness;’—no more I did. Howsomdever, I told the doctor next day, that his stuff had done me good, just to put him in good humour; and as we were now in Malta harbour, got him to ask leave of the captain to let me go ashore. Well, I knew better than he what I wanted—a good sweating. So, your honour, I went and hired a mule to ride round the island; and what with his kicking, and shying, and bolting, and my paying him off with a cudgel, I got off him

without a dry thread about me and that cured me of my lumbago."

This remedy, suggested I believe undesignedly by sailor Jemmy, was close at hand, in the stables, there being installed there two black coach-horses, with long tails, and a most ugly huge-boned Irish hack, purchased of a gipsy for the sum of 10*l.*, which carried a rider and packages to Shrewsbury, went in a cart, and was a servant of all work. My uncle, in his impatience to rid himself of his lumbago, ordered him to be saddled on the instant, was helped up, and set out for a cure, in some other road than in the direction of Shrewsbury; but the beast, after he had gone very unwillingly a mile on that road, came to a dead stand-still, and wouldn't budge an inch further — so my uncle let him turn back, passed his own house, and got him into a trot on the Shrewsbury road, on reaching which, he turned short into the yard of the "Raven," where he had always taken his lunch. Paddy, as he had been named by the gipsy who sold him, was led out of the yard by the ostler, and was

returning very soberly home, when his ears pricked up at the clattering of the mail-coach wheels behind, and the clanging of the horn. This roused his mettle; off he set, flinging up his heels behind, all in play, prancing, snorting, curveting, gallopading, and determined that the mail should not overtake him till he gained the Hall, which he did to the infinite amusement of all spectators that afternoon on the road, and put my uncle completely into a hot bath.

The squire, much shaken by the rough action of Paddy, and sore from head to foot, retired betimes that night to bed; and, wonderful to say, awoke quite himself next morning. "These things," he said to himself, "o'ercome us like a summer's cloud. A little pain in my loins yesterday made me a great brute; I deserve not years of health, who am thus unmanned by a day's indisposition."

My uncle now gave orders to Jemmy, to construct for him a seventy-four in the very highest style of his art, for which he contracted at the rate of 10s. 6d. a gun. He

was two years in finishing it, and, being a very clever fellow and handy workman, did justice to the contract. It was named the "Victoria," both in commemoration of Wellington's triumph over the French, and my uncle's over the lumbago; and now adorns the chimney-piece of the Squire's hall. He gave me leave to ride Paddy whenever I chose, in whatever direction I could get him to go; and after a little practice Paddy went in all.

CHAP. XXVI.

I meet the Shropshire Fox-hounds.—Sketch of some of the Sportsmen.—The running Tailor; two Stories told by my Uncle.

I OBTAINED my uncle's permission, at the Christmas holidays, to ride Paddy once a week with the fox-hounds. The coachman grumbled out that he warn't fit for such work, and that his coat, which indeed was as thick as that of a bear, would never get dry after a sweat; that when he had rubbed him over he would break out again, — and all that. My uncle, having noted that the mules in Spain were sheared of their winter coats in October, got a fellow to shear Paddy; and I believe had the merit of first introducing the clipping system into England.

I cannot say that it improved the animal's personal appearance, particularly the com-

plexion of his coat. For such a rusty one, I believe, was never as yet seen in a hunting-field; but all of a sudden he became very frisky, and improved wonderfully in condition.

The master of the Shropshire hounds was a very gentlemanly man, of good fortune, rather capricious in temper when the scent was bad, not at all regular in his appointments, or punctual to the hour of meeting, the pack being his own, and not being kept by subscription; and therefore he, of course, was not popular. He had no family by his wife, and was so devoted to the sport, that he would open the window continually, the night before the meet, to see whether there was any appearance of frost; and had a large map of the country he hunted, on which he had marked with silk threads every run in a straight line, from point to point, measuring ten miles. Absorbed in his favourite amusement, which, if indeed such, was not the plague of his life, you never heard him make use of the vulgar slang of fox-hunters. He

had too good breeding for that, and indeed more than suited every fox-hunter's taste. His lady, too, was rather a fine lady, and once rather offended some of the Rooksnest villagers, by saying she had never seen any sign of life or gaiety in the village but once, when a cart chanced to be overturned in the street. My uncle, however, though no sportsman, and my aunt Maria, found them the most agreeable people in all the country round, to dine and pass the night with.

I recollect the morning when I was going to make my *début* on the great stage of every county,—the hunting field.

"The morning lower'd, and heavily in clouds
Brought on the great, the important day."

I mounted Paddy in white cords and top-boots, and as I passed through the village, was saluted by an impertinent girl with the title of "Puss-in-Boots." The blacksmith left his anvil to tell me he had fastened the nails of my hunting shoes over night, and everybody proclaimed to me a hunting morn, as it already began to drizzle, with the wind at south-east.

Everybody on the road told me we were sure to find at Dead Man's Copse; and some ambiguous compliments were paid to me on the beauty of my horse; so that I felt somewhat small when, at the place of meeting, I had to face about seventy sportsmen, most of whom were very well mounted.

There stood Mr. Piecrust, with the top of a bottle peeping out of his side pocket, and a reverend gentleman, who said he had come out to see George — ride, the reverend gentleman being mounted on another Rosinante, and never thinking of urging the sorry steed beyond a trot. This was the most active clergyman in the county in getting up whist clubs and cricket matches. "Anything, my dear Sir, to get people together." Light-hearted and frolicsome as a boy in company, but, without its excitement, spiritless and dejected. He had a pun ever ready to the occasion: "There goes the horse painter a-hunting: follows his trade, and sticks to the *brush*."

Then there was a tall athletic man, of courteous manners, who looked as wise as Lord

ThurLOW himself, and spoke in a grave oracular tone of voice, perfectly imposing. One day a fox was tallyhoed. He galloped off to ascertain the truth, and returned with a very grave countenance: "By Gad, gentlemen," he said, "a false alarm! it's nothing after all but a poodle-dog."

Then there was a worthy admiral, a dry Scotchman, always greatly interested in the matter, who abominated the screechings and hallooings of ignorant sportsmen the very moment that a fox showed his nose out of cover. One day he got a view of reynard stealing away, when no one else was near. On he rode to the master of the hounds, big with the important secret; "Maister Smith," pointing to the spot where the fox had broken, "Maister Smith, tally-ho!" and in such a whisper that only Mr. Smith could hear it. That was not the name, however, of the master of the hounds at the time I first introduced myself and Paddy to the Shropshire hounds.

Of this my first day with a pack of foxhounds I shall not presume to be the chro-

nieler. Every body was first in the run, and nobody last, or even so far behind as to be second. If there really was one two miles behind the hounds, he was with them all the way, and recorded the run in the county paper. I shall not brag myself. I led the whole field, went through thick and thin, and over everything, and nobody saw so much of it, except a tailor on foot. But this was no ordinary tailor or pedestrian, or lover of the chase. It is well known that he often walked twenty miles to meet the hounds, at such a pace that no horse could walk against him; contrived to keep with them; and returned home at night, ready to meet them another day that same week. By one of those strange ups as well as downs of fortune, the tailor, at about forty-six, made good his claim to one of the most ancient of English earldoms.

On my return home, the squire made more inquiries after the tailor than any one else, calling him a plucky fellow, who did honour to the endurance and bodily activity of the Anglo-Norman race. "What a health-giving, invigo-

rating climate this must be, of our sea-girded island! Where are there such soldiers, such sailors! Where such pedestrians, such pugilists, such cricket-players! Where such a breed of horses! 'Eclipse' was the first horse in the world. Yet for a mile, but for a mile only, he had his superior in speed, for that horse performed a mile in a minute. I do not feel a partiality to turf-men, — I cannot say I do; but I admire the accuracy by which the weights of the riders are so exactly ascertained by weighing every rider after the race; for as the last feather breaks the camel's back, so a grain more to the weight a horse carries makes a difference in his speed. One of those lads who ride trials, told me once at Newmarket, that he had several times beaten the one he had ridden against, till one morning the other beat his horse by a nose. He could not make it out, for his horse showed no mark of having fallen off the least in condition; when, on going to his bed-room to change his coat, as he pulled it off something chinked on the floor, which on picking up he found to be the little latch-key

of his lodging, that he had inadvertently slipped into his pocket that morning."

I could not help laughing, and asked my uncle whether he thought the story true. "Perhaps I should not, had I read it in a book ; but I never take my stories from scribblers." He told me one day another story, of a gentleman who went to auctions merely out of idleness, and used to bid at the beginning of the sale for every thing that was put up, without even hearing sometimes what the article was. One day the auctioneer, after the last rap of his hammer, said, "To you, Sir ; where will you have him sent ?"

"What is it," he said to his neighbour, in some alarm, "that's knocked down to me ?"

"Why, the elephant, Sir ; and here comes a man for your address."

CHAP. XXVII.

My Uncle's Ideas about good Society and the Nobility.—He instances a few great Writers in different Countries, who had not shown a Genius for Humour.

“PAPA,” said my aunt Maria to her father, one morning, “I mean to write to the Townleys (Mr. Townley was the name of the master of the foxhounds, whom I have before mentioned), to ask them to fix a day to stay with us a night.”

“Do so, Maria, by all means ; and we'll invite the family at Lombard Court to meet them at dinner, and the Doctor and Mr. Allworth.”

“Now, don't you think we had better have the Piccrusts for another day's party?”

“For as many more as you please ; but we'll have them to meet the Townleys. Ay, I see you don't consider them quite genteel enough, — not what you call good society enough.”

“Oh, but they are very good sort of people; but the Townleys have always moved in very select society. Mrs. Townley, you know, was a Howard.”

“What! a relation to the great philanthropist, that apostle of humanity, the visitor of the dungeon and the prison, who in the midst of his charitable labours died of fever in the Crimea?”

“Not a relation of him, that I know of, but of the noble family of that name.”

“It is a noble family, Maria; we have never heard of a spot upon its scutcheon. I am glad to hear that Mrs. Townley is a Howard, related to that ancient and illustrious family. It is one of the best guarantees for her good breeding. Had she been a Johnson or a Jackson, just raised to rank for great wealth, she might have given herself airs; and Mrs. Piecrust and her daughters, who you honour with the name of good sort of people, might not have been fashionable enough to have suited her taste; but as those ladies are so unassuming and good-tempered, Mrs. Town-

ley will have the politeness to be at her ease with them, and to make them at their ease with her. And Townley will find some relief in Piecrust's conversation, perhaps, from that everlasting topic of fox-hunting, for I shall try and bring him out on the subject of his profession."

"Now have you any objection to the Doctor? for his father you know was in trade."

"Oh, his profession gives him a certain position in society."

"Then we'll invite the party I have named to meet the Townleys."

Maria said no more, and left my uncle and myself together.

"Good society!" he began muttering — "words so often in the mouths of vulgar people; often to be seen in novels, written by vulgar trollops; words of such different signification, according to the ideas on the subject of those who make use of them. I have occasionally been in good society myself, at a very genteel dinner party, and had rather have been set in the stocks. People were too genteel, even to laugh :

indeed it would have been difficult, in the midst of such insipid talk; the young lady on one side, drawling out in a low whispering voice, "Are you going to Lady Owen's to-night? and were you at Mrs. Camac's last night?" and the middle-aged lady on the other, without a family and daughters to bring out, hoping that we should have a gay season. The gentlemen, all extremely genteel, too, and as flat as ditch water. Perhaps there was an M. P. for a rotten borough, who assumed the important, who had been thrust into the *House*, where he was going that evening to give his silent vote. Perhaps there was a foolish talky lord, who was the oracle of the party, for you must know, Bob, that we have our idols, as the Egyptians had of old; but, fortunately for you, you knock about and are knocked about by dukes, marquises, and earls, at school; and are in no danger of becoming a tuft-hunter and a toady. Upon my life, I often blush for my countrymen in this respect. Were I to put up Paddy at Tattersall's, I should get double his worth

were I my Lord Easy. My friend Piecrust, I must say, is a little given to this vulgarity. I wonder that our nobility are generally such perfect gentlemen, so polite, so unaffected, and have so much general knowledge. It shows how well they have been educated and brought up at home. Good society! well I have some idea what it is. In the first place, people who meet together must be sociable, or it is not society; and on such terms with one another as to interchange ideas in easy unconstrained conversation. People of good common sense, intelligence, and information; persons that can make themselves agreeable — listeners as well as talkers. But a company of dull triflers, however polite be their manners, I don't call good society, but merely society, without the adjective applied to it. Society is quite enough however for the world in general. To get into society is all they require, if they have no occupation, and no resources within themselves to make home agreeable, or even tolerable."

Now my uncle never complained of want

of society at the Hall, or ever felt it. Dr. Baillie was certainly a perfect kill-joy to him; but he had his daughter, and Mr. Allworth, and myself. And I think I do not over-estimate myself in saying that I was something, for I was a good listener, and often laughed heartily at some dry, quaint observation of my uncle's; and I believe he was rather flattered than not by it, and said occasionally things on purpose to set me off, but always with so grave a face, as if he never meant to be droll: "*Igitur quo minus risum appetebat, eo magis assequetur.*" It was just the contrary with Mr. Piecrust, who always laughed at *his* jokes, which were not always of a nature for others to laugh at. A dead fellow without a sense of the ludicrous, would not have detected the humour of my uncle's sly hits and inuendoes. On Dr. Baillie or my aunt Tabitha they would have fallen still-born. He delighted in humorous authors, and often read Swift's "Tale of a Tub," and his "Advice to Servants."

In grave caustic irony, he said the Dean

of St. Patrick's had no equal, or in making a falsehood appear like truth, as in his "Draper's Letters," and "Gulliver's Travels." The feast in the manner of the ancients, in Smollett's "Peregrine Pickle," brought tears of laughter into his eyes; and Fielding's "Parson Adams," and "Don Quixote," he almost knew by heart. I never remember to have heard my uncle make a pun, which he always pretended not to understand when it was attempted by others. It was a play on words, he thought, that did no credit even to the clown at Astley's, who was by far the best of all the herd of small wits.

My uncle called for his pipe, and after he had rolled over the subject in his head, and inspired it with five minutes' inspiration of Turkish tobacco:—

"I think, Dr. Johnson," he said, taking me for the Doctor, and fancying himself one of that celebrated club, where the Doctor braced up his mind to converse with Thurlow, "that the great majority of celebrated authors have displayed some touch of humour in their

writings. Confining myself to those who did not merely write works of wit and humour, such as comic writers, and satirists, as Aristophanes among the Greeks, and the Roman satirist, Horace, and the French Rabelais, and the Italian Boccaccio, and the English Peter Pindar. But I will first enumerate some exceptions to this. Among the Greeks, indeed, we have no instance of humour, that I have heard of, in the tragic authors, Sophocles, Æschylus, or Euripides. None in the great Roman poet, Virgil. None in the great French tragic writer, Corneille. None in the two English authors, Milton or Samuel Johnson. But, *per contra*, in France, the great tragic poet, Racine, wrote that most laughable farce, 'Les Plaideurs,' and Voltaire, 'Candide.' In Italy, Dante, even in his 'Inferno,' has given us touches of his humour, though the torments of the damned was his subject. In England our great bard, the Swan of Avon, the immortal author of 'Macbeth,' 'Hamlet,' 'Othello,' spares no occasion to frolic in wit and humour in all his dramas. Lastly,

I shall close my remarks by reminding you of no lack of humour in Goethe's magnificent German dramatic poem of 'Faust.' "

Here my uncle smoked out the last whiff: "But I had forgotten," he added, "Walter Scott, who is now displaying his amiable *good-natured humour* in his splendid romances. I have forgotten Goldsmith's 'Vicar of Wakefield,' too, in which there are exquisite touches of humour; and Canning's 'Needy Knife-grinder;' and Cowper, too, wrote 'Johnny Gilpin.' Oh, dear me, to-day, how my memory fails me!"

CHAP. XXVIII.

My Uncle addresses the National Assembly of France, consisting of the Curate and myself, in a very remarkable Speech of Mirabeau's.—Some Observations on the Character of Mirabeau, and of the Great Napoleon.

I USED to ask my uncle a number of school-boy's questions, such as whether he had often fought behind school, what fag he had to brush his coat and shoes, who was his private tutor, if he got many prize books, who was his great crony, what tree he used to have his arbour upon, if he was ever caught out in stealing wood from Colonel Ironside's hedge to make his oven at the butts, and what form he was in when he left school, and if he ever spoke, and what was the speech if he did.

Now, as to my last question, he answered, that he remembered having spoken at school, but had forgotten all about the speech, except that it was in Latin.

“Did you ever speak, uncle, when you were in Parliament?”

“Occasionally.”

“Do they speak there as well as some of our fellows do on a speech day?”

“Well, never mind that, Bob; if you wish to hear a good speech, I can give you one that Mirabeau spoke in the National Assembly; and here comes Mr. Allworth, just in time to hear it.”

After squeezing the curate's hand, he told him that he must that morning fancy himself in the gallery of the National Assembly, at the time when the French revolution was already hastening to its close, listening to a very remarkable speech of Mirabeau's, of a very different style to those which he had thundered forth with so vehement an eloquence.

“Mirabeau,” he said, “Allworth, the great and talented leader of the Constitutionalists, was then considered a formidable enemy by the Democratic party, as a secret friend to the king, and an aspirant to the ministry. The Democrats, in order to prevent Mirabeau from

becoming minister, bethought themselves of a very notable and crafty expedient; this was to get some obscure man of their party to propose, in direct infringement of the royal prerogative, that no deputy of the assembly should be eligible to any place in the ministry. Whereupon Mirabeau rose, and thus spoke." I fancy I see my uncle now thus in imagination addressing Mr. Allworth and myself, as the whole body of the National Assembly:—

"Messieurs, I am of opinion that it may be expedient to exclude some certain deputies from forming part of the Ministry; but in order to obtain this advantage, as I do not think it expedient to sacrifice for this a great principle, I propose, as an amendment, to limit this exclusion to those members of the assembly whom the author of this motion appears to hold in so much dread; and I therefore now charge myself with the task of making you acquainted with them.

"In the whole of this assembly, there are but two individuals who can be pointed at in the present motion; for the rest have afforded

satisfactory proofs of their zeal in the cause of liberty, of their courage and their public spirit, to quiet the apprehensions of the honourable mover : but there are two individual deputies of whom I may be permitted, both as it concerns him and myself, to speak with greater freedom. And but to one of those two can this motion assuredly be applicable. Who then are these individuals? You must have already divined, gentlemen, that they are the author of the present motion and myself. First, I say, that one of them is the author of this motion, because it may be that he, in his modest embarrassment and nervous apprehension lest some great mark of public confidence may be about to be conferred upon him, has proposed to himself, by a general exclusion of all the members of this assembly, to provide for himself the means of refusing this dreaded mark of honour.

“Secondly, I say, that it is to myself that this motion applies, on account of certain popular rumours that have been circulated respecting me, which have alarmed certain

persons, and possibly given rise to some hopes in the minds of others, — reports which it is very possible the author of this motion may have given credence to; and again, because it is very possible that he entertains the same idea of me that I do of myself; whence it results that he considers me as incapable of fulfilling the duties of a mission, which I regard as being far above, not indeed my zeal for the public service, but of my ability to discharge it. Certainly, I marvel not at this. Much, however, should I regret this exclusion on my own personal account, for the reason that it would deprive me of the lessons and advice which I have not ceased to receive in this assembly.

“This, then, gentlemen, is the amendment which I propose, viz. that the exclusion proposed be confined to Monsieur de Mirabeau, deputy for the town of Aix; and truly fortunate shall I esteem myself if, thus excluded, I may indulge the hope of seeing many honourable members here, so worthy of my confidence, become the confidential advisers of

the nation and of the sovereign, whom I shall never cease to consider as indivisible."

"Now who, Allworth," said my uncle at the conclusion of the speech, "would have expected such calm and moderate language, bitter as it tasted to the proposer of the motion, and that poor tool of his party, from the man who, when the grand master of the ceremonies commanded the parliament then sitting in the Tennis Court of Versailles to disperse by order of the king, thus apostrophised him in a voice of thunder, as he bounced up to the poor marquis in a theatrical attitude: 'And you, Sir, who have neither place nor voice in this assembly, begone, and tell your master that we quit not these benches but at the point of the bayonet!'"

"I do admire the speech," said the curate, "for its address, so ingratiating to the assembly he was speaking to, and so polished in its irony to the unhappy proposer of the motion."

"Mirabeau, had not his career been so prematurely cut off," said my uncle, "would have saved the French monarchy."

“In that, Sir, pardon me; I do not agree with you. He had no rival in eloquence, it is true, for Barnave was only then rising; but what could his eloquence have done against the unpopularity of the cause that he had just begun to espouse? Suppose that it had weighed somewhat in the National, not yet the Legislative Assembly, what would have been the effect on the mob of Paris, which had now begun to assume the mastery? His name was already placarded on the walls, hawked about the streets as the grand conspirator, in consequence of the belief that he was now intriguing with the court. The instant that he confirmed this belief, by becoming the adviser of the king as minister, the mob of Paris would have torn in pieces their former champion, as a traitor. What besides could he have done without an army, for the soldiers were all disaffected, and the army of Bouillé had been dismissed, on which he might have counted, previously to the taking of the Bastile?”

“Well, Allworth, I ground arms to you, and won't argue the question, because I foresee you

will have the best of it. And, indeed, this great orator might have turned out a very bad statesman. With all his genius, he was a swaggering fellow, who on his death-bed, on hearing the guns fire for some victory, exclaimed, 'What! are they already celebrating the funeral of Achilles?' And he said as he was just descending into his grave, that he bore with him the wreck of the monarchy."

"Of which," said the curate, "had he lived, he could not have saved one plank."

"And after all his zeal for liberty, when he saw at the eleventh hour that the tyranny of the mob was the most oppressive and shameful of all tyrannies, and he then offered his services to the king, he bargained for his loyalty at the price of some 10,000*l.* per month. This venality, though not revealed at the time, yet strongly suspected by the people, did indeed damage his character in their eyes, who admired his irregularities and his debaucheries, and looked upon these as the fit accomplishments of a great man."

"He was no patriot, but a vile, selfish de-

magogue, Mr. Easy, endowed with great talents, which he prostituted to bad ends."

"And there's an end of him," said my uncle contemptuously; "and there will soon perhaps be an end of this man, on whom the sun of Austerlitz once shone so brightly; another great man, who was far superior to Mirabeau, and began so well by putting an end to the democracy, and acquired his imperial crown, as a soldier of fortune, by right, as I may call it, of his sword,—that is a better right than by perjury. He was bred up a soldier, and ruled as a soldier a warlike nation. That is what was to be expected of him. I do not hear that he ever violated any engagements—he had none to the exiled family of Bourbon; he had not received any favour from any of that race which demanded his gratitude; he was in every thing independent, as a military adventurer, to act according to his own will and pleasure, and France was very willing that he should do so as long as he extended her dominions; but England was not so, nor Europe, when roused into action by England."

“He is certainly, Mr. Easy, what he might have been expected to turn out, from his education, and from his lot being cast in that age of revolution. I even think that very few, under the same circumstances, would have acted so great a part, with so few blots on his character. These however are quite sufficient, and more indeed than enough: his putting the Duke d’Enghien to death (not from cruelty, but from a pretext of state necessity, a very convenient one for the most atrocious crime); his abandonment of his army in Egypt; and again, of his army amidst the snows of Russia; and his divorcing his faithful wife Josephine.

“And I may add, Allworth, his petty jealousy of the gallant little fellow who won the battle of Marengo, that placed the imperial crown on his master’s head.”

“And now,” said the curate, “that ‘his greatness is a-falling,’ we can afford to give him credit for the splendour of his genius, if he has the discretion to take warning from the lessons which he has lately received.”

“It is too late,” rejoined my uncle, “at least for his glory. His dream of making Europe his vassal is over, and woe be to the man who attempts hereafter to tread in his steps!”

CHAP. XXIX.

My Uncle's Peculiarities of Taste on the important Subject of Music. — His Observations on Sleep. — Those Stories with which he sent me to Bed.

MY aunt Maria had been singing one evening a ballad of the Irish Anacreon to her harp, when my uncle, catching some of the words, desired her to stop.

“Maria,” he said, “I will neither have Mr. Tommy Moore introduced into Cock-a-Roost Hall (though I am sure he would not deign to pay me the honour of a visit, if I invited him), nor any of his friends, nor any of his songs. If we are to have a love-song, sing me

‘A frog he would a-woeing go,
Heigh ho!’ said Rowley.’

It's a much better song than you can find in ‘Little's Poems,’ the work of that little Tommy.”

My aunt, not really attending to the nonsense of the words she was singing,—and it was very affronting to such an inspiration of the little bard to treat him with such contempt,—then commenced —

‘Oh no, we never mention her,
Her name is never heard.’”

“For Heaven’s sake! dear Maria, no more of that doleful ditty—let the poor lady sleep in quiet.”

She then began “The last Rose of Summer.”

Again he interrupted her: “No more of that ballad-monger! for this last Rose of Summer smells of the same shop. They must both be twins of the same sentimental brain.”

My aunt, who had all along been singing the songs which she knew were likely to excite his spleen, to enjoy the fun of the thing, then began, “For auld lang syne!” and finished it without any interruption.

She then sang, “Oh, let me wander not unseen!” from Milton’s “L’Allegro;” and when she came to —

“Let the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecks sound.
To many a youth and many a maid,
Dancing in the chequer'd shade,”

he clapped and cried, “Bravo! bravissimo!”

She then sang, in a style that would have done no discredit to a prima donna, the air out of Mozart's “Don Giovanni,” in which Don Juan enumerates the number of his sweethearts in Italy, in Germany, and throughout Europe, concluding with Spain; and as she came to that magnificent passage, “Ma in Espagna—ma in Espagna—mille e tré”—one thousand and three sweethearts in Spain, my uncle, full of his recollections of Spain, joined her in a rich deep voice, “Ma in Espagna,” and afterwards dropt into a doze.

What he dreamt of during his half hour's doze I cannot divine, for he never told us his dreams, even at breakfast, nor whether he *did* dream. Be that as it may, he awoke as Samuel entered with the tea-tray.

“‘Sleep wraps a man round like a blanket,’ says Sancho Panza in his homely language (I

beg pardon, though, for my rudeness); and Shakspeare calls it 'Nature's soft nurse.' It was held by metaphysicians that the soul could never be inactive, and that during sleep we never ceased to dream, whether we remembered or wholly forgot that we had dreamt. Locke was of a different opinion, though I recollect not his argument. Indeed I need none, to persuade me that the mind, or the soul, the agent of thought, requires repose and cessation of work, as well as the body; nor can I conceive the body to be in a state of perfect rest, while the mind is in a state of activity, for the body suffers more from the action of the mind, more wear and tear, than from its own exertions in general.

"Shakspeare seems to have been of this opinion, who says, 'Sleep, that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care;' and again, he calls it the death of each life's day. It is the grand restorative of the system; more so, most likely, than the nourishment it receives from food. I never despair of myself, however my appetite may fail me, provided I can sleep well; and it

was a night's sleep that carried off my lumbago, I have no doubt."

"Pray," said I, "uncle, why do people snore so when they are asleep?"

"Because, I conjecture, they have more difficulty in breathing than while they are awake."

"I think," said my aunt, "it is because they shut their mouths, and so breathe through their nose, and convert it into a wind-instrument, and not a very musical one."

"Well," said he, "I see through your malice, Maria; but forgive it, in consideration of the happiness of your conjecture."

"Now, uncle," said I, "why do people yawn and gape when they are sleepy?"

"I can't answer all your questions offhand, Bob."

"And why do people sigh when they are in grief?"

"*N'importe*. Talking of gaping, do you know how catching it is, and how a mischievous wag once stationed himself just opposite the judge, while he was hearing a cause, and

began incessantly gaping, till the judge, catching the infection, began to gape too, and at last perceiving the fellow opposite him, cried out, 'Officer, take that gaping fellow out of the court, there, directly.'

I always laughed at his stories, good or bad, in order to lead him on to tell me another. "Now, uncle," I said, "tell me another."

"Just as many as you please," said he. "I was once very intimate with a young barrister of the Temple, a droll, idle fellow, full of fun, and a very clever fellow too, though he never made his talents available. 'I was on the Welsh circuit,' he told me one day, 'with a dozen of my learned brethren. On our return home, at the end of the assizes, and after passing the night at a very bad inn, we were all hoping next morning that we might be able to find places in the coach, to carry us on; but, as this was a matter of doubt, I proposed that we should draw lots for any place that might be vacant. Well, I was quite put out of court, for I drew the last chance of all; but I was determined not to be left behind notwithstanding

that, if there was but a single place vacant in the coach. So I stole out of the room, walked a couple of miles in the direction to meet the coach, and on coming up to it asked the coachman if there was room. "Just one place inside." In I jumped, and the coach went on and pulled up at the miserable inn, where I had left my learned brethren. Out they flew, and asked the coachman what room there was. "The last place inside just taken;" said he, when on peeping into the coach to ascertain the truth, there they found me, snug in the corner, laughing at the trick I had played them. And all laughed too, coachman and passengers, all but themselves, as soon as they heard of my roguery.'"

I was now more eager than before for another story; and this was the next he related to me:—

"There was a certain pope, whose name I have forgot, a very self-opiniated one, who always consulted the cardinals on any measure that he had before made up his mind to carry, for the benefit of his patrimony of St. Peter. Now in his political sagacity, as temporal head of the

domains of the Church, he had proposed a very distasteful and obnoxious tax, and, according to his custom, consulted the cardinals. Now they all knew that, in spite of the Holy Father's affecting to submit himself to their advice, he would be in a most diabolical passion with any one of them that showed the slightest disapprobation of the measure which he consulted them on. One of these cardinals, on being asked by the pope his opinion on this obnoxious impost, thus replied: 'Please your Holiness, everything that pleases your Holiness pleases me; and everything that your Holiness may approve of, I approve of; but if your Holiness had not chanced to approve of the tax in question, neither should I have approved of it, most certainly.'

"And now, Bob, to bed."

"One more story, uncle."

"No more; 'now my weary lips I close.'"

CHAP. XXX.

Rooksnest Fair.—The wonderful German Conjuror there, who exhibited in a Booth. — My Uncle detects his Jugglery. — His short Remarks on the Character of the Germans.

THINGS went on at Rooksnest much in the same ordinary round throughout the year, save on the grand day of the fair, which was held on the green. Then mustered together, from far and near, wild-beast caravans and shows; single-stick players for broken heads (the sticks being tipped with a small nail, which if it drew blood by a mere scratch, the head was allowed to be broken); and blindfold wheelers of barrows, with some pond to guard against in the course marked out for them; and grinners through horse-collars, and soap-tailed pigs to catch; a donkey race, in which the stakes were allotted to the ass which came in last, so that each rider kept whipping his neigh-

bour's donkey. There was a band playing before the wild beast show, and another before that where the clown and pantaloons were playing their antics on an open stage, and before that in which a tall life-guardsmen was personating a giantess,—a great drum in these bands drowning every other instrument. Then there was a motley throng of thimble-riggers, and gypsies, and pickpockets, and all the "*Dii minorum gentium*." And there were dancing booths, in which the rustics in nailed shoes "heavily did trudge and labour."

Here sailor Jemmy, in an admiral's cocked hat, and a long pigtail, displayed his agility in a hornpipe, to the music of a cracked fiddle.

I remember that there occurred a strange accident at the fair I am now speaking of, in a conjuror's booth, which happily produced no serious mischief. There was a small barrel of gunpowder in the booth, for some purpose or other of the conjuror's, which, by what carelessness I have not learned, exploded, blew off the top of the tent, and terribly frightened, though

it did not hurt anybody therein ; but it did not frighten Jemmy, who was one of the spectators. It merely stunned him for the moment, and then set him a laughing. "My eye," said he, twitching up his trowsers, "well, that is a queer trick ! I wonder what Master Hocus Pocus will be up to next."

There was at this fair a second conjuror's booth, into which I with Johnny entered, paying a shilling each. The fellow was a German, with a long beard, of very solemn countenance, who sent people to sleep by sitting opposite to them, and staring them in the face, and see-sawing with his hands in profound silence. Some he sent to sleep very soon. Johnny, who poor fellow was naturally sleepy, he did so easily. Others he could not in a quarter of an hour, and gave them up as a bad job. He tried his hocus pocus on me, but the sight of his grotesque German phiz threw me into such a fit of laughter, as he kept waving his hands, and fixing his eyes on me, that being then masticating part of a penny-worth of gingerbread, it flew out of my jaws

with the velocity of a pistol shot, right into his left eye, and streamed down his tawny beard, to the great amusement of all the spectators. He looked, as they say, as if he could not help it, and a little discomfited for some time ; but he had my shilling, and that was all he wanted. Well, he gave me up as a most incorrigible subject.

A young woman now offered herself to be the subject of his incantations, with the strongest signs of incredulity ; but in about three minutes he see-sawed her into profound sleep, when she began talking in her sleep the wildest nonsense, recommending every one present to be sent to sleep by the wonderful man. " Oh ! he has done me so much good ! " " Ah ! " said he, " she has faith ; you'll see what she can do ; she shall see in her sleep what she could not see if she was awake." So putting a sealed-up letter before her : " Now tell me what's written in this." " There, ladies and gentlemen," he said, opening the letter and showing it to all the company, " you see she said just what's in it."

On returning home I was full of this German conjuror.

“This fellow,” said my uncle, “is a Mesmerite juggler. Mesmer, the inventor of this jugglery, introduced it into Paris in the time, I think, of Louis XV. It made a great noise then among the idle people of fashion, who in all countries are so credulous, and perpetually catching at any straw to divert their *ennui*; and it created great scandal in consequence of the licentious abuses to which it was prostituted. At length, to open the eyes of the credulous, a commission of men of science was appointed fully to investigate the subject, which, after probing the matter, unanimously declared, that mesmerism was nothing more than a mere trick, practised by tricksters for the sake of gain, upon weak, nervous people, and that as a pretended science it was utterly and wholly without any foundation whatever to support it. Now, Bob, this bearded German mountebank, who exhibited in his booth, was in collusion with the young woman, who he pretended had the faculty of

clairvoyance, and so her telling the contents of the sealed letter is accounted for. I should advise him to make himself scarce, or I shall certainly send the constable to him.

“ And that Walter Scott, what a fine fellow he is! Without a spark of malice or ill nature in all his writings; without any of that morbid Satanic spirit which has just made its appearance; with what fun and humour he plays upon the German character in his German juggler, Dousterswivel! Well, we must forgive the Germans for their mesmerism, and their craniology, and their homœopathy, &c. &c. They invented the art of printing, and clocks, and they invented gunpowder; and they have been prettily repaid for that discovery, for there is scarce a war that has desolated Europe since, of which they have not had their full share: and to them, above all other things, we owe the Reformation. And they are a people of great genius. They can boast of the two greatest poets since the time of our Shakspeare. And they dabble in metaphysics, and puzzle their heads

about some things, without enlightening others, such as Divinity, and all studies that afford them food for speculation. I never could *talk* German, it always made my throat sore when I attempted it.

CHAP. XXXI.

Dr. Baillie attempts to figure in a public Journal.—My Uncle lectures him for it.—He enumerates several Reverend Authors.—The Doctor gets mellowed with Age.—My Uncle pooh-poohs down a liberal Politician, by telling him some ridiculous Stories instead of answering his Arguments.—The six Portraits that were hung up in his Study:—he occasionally addresses them.—Description of his Study.—He had but one Dog on his Premises, and did not know his Name.—His Ideas about Pet-Dogs.

UNCLE Baillie had now grown out of much of his college rust, and had become less self-important, much milder in manner towards little boys and girls sucking lollipops on a Sunday, and less wrathful against Independents, who, he confessed, were, some of them, good men, though he lamented the error of their understandings. It may be thought that I have represented him as an odious character for a clergyman. There were many like him in those times, which raised up a truly religious seceder from the Church Esta-

blishment in the person of John Wesley. There have been many far greater scandals to it since, that have much injured the cause itself of religion,—debauchees and profligates, who one would have wished had never lived in any rank of life.

What I have said to the prejudice of Dr. Baillie's character I shall not retract, because it is true; and there are truths which, I think, ought to be told, especially of those who are no more to hear them, and to be prejudiced by their avowal. The memory of a man is sacred, only in so far as it ought to be held sacred.

Some better qualities now showed themselves in our Rooksnest rector. I have before mentioned the kindness and respect with which he invariably treated his curate, feeling no envy against him on the score of that superiority which he acknowledged in him. He had as little of that base passion as clings to most of us, and admired instead of envying the curate for his sound knowledge of divinity; though he had perhaps better, for himself, have fixed his admiration on Mr.

Allworth's humble services to his humble parishioners.

The Doctor now began to take down from the shelf some volumes of his Oxford studies, on different subjects of controversial theology, and sat to them with the same zeal as Don Quixote did to books of knight-errantry. *In mala hora*, in an evil hour for himself, he became, after some months, a controversial theologian on such debatable points as baptismal regeneration, &c. ; and at length opened fire in some journal or other on such topics, which roused other controversialists to reply to him, not always in the most moderate language. In short, he engaged in a paper war, and with the indiscreet vanity of inexperienced writers, had put his name to his letters, which saluted my uncle as he read the journal one day with more than ordinary attention, in which his son-in-law had inserted his theological learning ; and thinking it rather rash in the Doctor, who was certainly not a clever man, nor even a learned man, from the cramming that he had endured at Oxford, to appear in

print, ventured one morning on the ungracious task, and very reluctantly, of giving him a little of his own mind on the subject of clergymen turning authors without a sufficient and adequate excuse for it.

“ Now,” said he, “ Baillie, I do hope you will excuse my habit of plain speaking, for I am too much in earnest sometimes to mince matters; and I may appear to be rude and uncourteous, when I say what I think to be truth, however unwelcome it may sound, in the most friendly spirit.

“ If a clergyman, with cure of souls, in order to employ his time, thinks it incumbent upon him to write in the public papers, it seems to me that it should be upon some practical point of religion, in which all are concerned, but not on some abstruse point of doctrine into which the learned alone can enter. People are not always the wiser, in proportion as they become more learned, nor better Christians. A clergyman who attends to his duty finds quite enough to do in his parish, and that duty is by no means a sinecure to him. An

active-minded clever man" (which certainly Dr. Baillie was not) "will find spare time to write, if talent prompts him. Bishop Burnet wrote his 'History of his Own Times,' and at that particular crisis it was not unbecoming in him to be an historian; and Bishop Butler, too, wrote his 'Analogy,' and Paley his 'Evidences of Christianity,' and his 'Natural Theology.' If any of the clergy can now write like Butler and Paley, let them set about it. Bishop Ken wrote his Hymns,—the little fellow whom Charles II. made Bishop of Wells,—though he had refused poor Nelly a lodging in his house,—one of the worthiest of England's bishops. And there have been other reverend authors: that Irish wit, the Dean of St. Patrick's; that talented scamp, Laurence Sterne; and the Rev. Peter Pindar, Dr. Walcott; and there was Bishop Atterbury, a fine writer and a very dishonest man."

My uncle told me, that he was glad when Mrs. Baillie came into the room, and put an end to his lecture, which it was as unpleasant to him to deliver, as to his son-in-law to receive.

Dr. Baillie was certainly a man of weak mind, and I do not say so to carp at him, any more than if he had been of a weak bodily constitution, but as an excuse, so far as it goes, for his many infirmities. He did not, however, tread a downward path as the autumn of his life set in. After the first smarting was over, which he had felt from his father-in-law's friendly lecture, he left off the ill habit of scribbling merely for the sake of ridding himself of *ennui*, and instead of writing himself, took to reading what authors of sense and knowledge had written for the instruction of the world; read the morning service himself every other Sunday, and let Mr. Allworth preach, and was always ready to take either part at the evening's service. The doctor in time began to be sensible, that in curing himself of his self-importance, he was not in fact a less important person.

My uncle interested himself more about the English clergy than perhaps many of them would have thanked him for, had they known it. One day, however, he had a turn about the Catholics.

“I remember, Sir,” he said to a gentleman who in a great spirit of political liberalism was arguing very plausibly in favour of Catholic Emancipation, “that while I was journeying in the Spanish diligence, from Pampeluna, through Tudela, to Saragossa, a buffoon of a priest began counting all the cardinal sins on his fingers, and laughing at every one of them; and I remember an Italian priest, on my voyage from Naples to Messina, who was on deck, playing in like manner the buffoon, coming up to me, and saying, ‘*Pourquoi ne croyez-vous au Pape?*’ I answered him that we had quite enough to do with our spare money, in paying taxes to our own clergy, and could not afford to subscribe St. Peter’s pence to the pope. ‘Ah!’ said he, ‘it’s a paltry affair then about money that has caused you English to rebel against the successor of the apostle St. Peter; but you don’t refuse to pay priests for absolving you from your sins; surely, you don’t grudge twopence or threepence for a few years’ reprieve from purgatory.’

“‘Father,’ I answered, ‘I have read about purgatory in Dante; but not a word of it in the Scriptures.’

“‘Ah,’ said he, ‘that comes of you heretics being allowed to read the Bible. Well, you may go further than purgatory, and fare the worse. Look at that box there on deck, and behold for your comfort, sinner, -- and a pretty hardened one too, by your face, I judge, -- full remission granted to all your sins, past, present, and to come, at a mere trifling sacrifice to your purse.’

“‘Father,’ I asked, ‘have you about you a tariff for sins?’

“‘To be sure I have,’ he answered, ‘here it is; and the charges are at the very lowest price. Pay but the reckoning, and I guarantee you pardon hereafter in the next world; and so you are at perfect liberty to indulge yourself as you please.’

“On casting my eye over this tariff, I observed, ‘Here is one sin, I think, a very cheap bargain.’

“‘Yes,’ said he, ‘it ain’t a bad one;

but then, in the south, these peccadilloes are so frequent, that we can well afford to sell them cheap; and besides it's a very excusable sin, for Father Molina says,—but you don't understand Spanish, so I'll give you what he says upon it in French: “*Quand on est cocu, et que l'on ne sache pas, ce n'est rien; et si on le sait ce n'est pas grande chose.*”

“‘Father,’ said I, ‘do you allow the laity to read the Fathers, and forbid them to read the Bible?’

“‘Mr. Easy,’ said the liberal gentleman, who had been arguing in favour of Catholic Emancipation, ‘I don't exactly understand the drift of your argument.’

“‘Sir,’ said he, ‘I am not arguing, I never argue; I agree with all you have said, and hav'n't a word more to say on the subject.’”

The liberal gentleman was now taken quite aback, as they say, and beginning to divine that my uncle was only quizzing him with these silly tales he had related, wished him a good morning, and left the room in

dudgeon, without having fired off half his powder.

My uncle grinned with delight, in having thus got rid of him.

“This is the way,” he said, “in which I pooh-pooh down such self-important block-heads, who bore one on politics. A pretty liberal this! one of the proudest, and consequently most stupid squires in the county;—an arbitrary tyrannical fellow, too, whenever he can have his own way,—who cares just as much about Catholic Emancipation as John of the ‘Black Swan.’

‘Oh those scurvy politicians, with glass eyes,
Who *seem* to see the things they do not!’

I wish the Parliament joy, when they get the Irish Catholics into their body; neither Mr. Speaker, nor the short-hand writers, will have any sinecure of it. No doubt we shall have plenty of plausible arguments for this measure, and of liberal spouting, and many a Belial, to make the worse appear the better cause.”

About this question, however, he never troubled himself more, and he dismissed the subject by saying, "Let politicians and politics run their course, so long as I am allowed to think and speak with freedom in a land of liberty, where there is no Lynch law."

I have several times mentioned my uncle's study, and beg leave now to describe it briefly.

Among the portraits that were hung around there was not a single politician. Over his mantel-piece hung the portrait of Howard the Philanthropist. On each side of his book-case were Dr. Johnson and Archdeacon Paley. On the wall fronting the mantel-piece, were the portraits of Bishop Ken, Cardinal Borromeo, and Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden. These were his household gods. I have often heard him address them, in one of those fits of complete abstraction which occasionally came over him, when he was unconscious that so important a personage as myself was present to hear the compliments he paid them. "Noble soldier of the Cross," he would say to Howard; "friend of humanity, whose thoughts of the poor captive,

pinning in his dungeon, stimulated thy benevolence into action, and sent thee forth, a solitary wanderer, into a foreign country, to visit him, and to relieve him, and to intercede for him; great shall be thy reward hereafter, and to all thy followers in time to come !”

Then turning to Samuel Johnson's portrait, he would thus apostrophise it: “O Doctor, in thy snuff-coloured suit, with the knees of thy breeches unbuttoned, and the fore part of thy wig singed off with the flame of the candle, with all thy grotesque whimsicalities and thy ungracious humours, thou art a noble-hearted fellow, a hero in courage and the very soul of charity. A better man than thee by my side, where shall I find in the hour of danger? and who in the wide world would carry me to thy home on thy very shoulders, did I lay, a famished wretch, on the cold pavement of London at night, but thee? And honoured be you for your writings, on whose pages there is not a stain !”

Then he would turn to Bishop Ken, and say, “Thou art the little fellow that was worthy

of his mitre, which thou didst lay down for principle's sake; the meek and humble man, who, in the decline of age travelled about with his coffin, and who composed his pious psalms.

“And where shall I find a Cardinal Borromeo, that Catholic good shepherd like thee, who fed his sheep, whose image, hewn out in a mountain, preserves thy memory?”

Lastly, turning to Gustavus Adolphus: “Thou, indeed, wast worthy of a crown, who leddest on thy soldiers in so many battles, not for the lust of dominion, but in the cause of civil and religious freedom, against the imperial powers of Austria and Spain, and died a soldier's death at Lutzen!”

But still, though he now and then broke forth in such rhapsodies, yet he was not mad, most noble Festus. He did not mistake, like the hero of Cervantes, windmills for giants, or flocks of sheep for armies of Moors. There were no false ideas in his head when he paid homage to the memory of Howard, Johnson, Ken, Borromeo, and Gustavus Adolphus.

There are many who would have pronounced

him mad, I am aware, who had seen him in one of his absent fits: people of the world, who live in the world, and live upon it too, as much as they can, by hook and by crook; people as cold-blooded as fish, who never experience enthusiasm for what is good, and consider all enthusiasm as nothing better than derangement of reason. This cold-blooded genus of the human species lifts up its hands and eyes, and stares dumb-struck at any one who shows earnestness of purpose in the pursuit of any object, even of amusement or recreation; but earnest admiration of any man, or of anything except indeed of money, or worldly advancement, passes with them for the proof of a weak and disordered intellect. Such people would assuredly have set down the squire of Cock-a-Roost Hall either for a fool or for one half crazed, had they witnessed these occasional exhibitions in his study, before the portraits of those great and good men, who constituted its chief ornament.

This study, which has been so often mentioned, was quite in the old style, with an oak

wainscot, and a carved ceiling, and the marble chimney-piece displayed the family arms in its centre. It opened into the flower-garden by a capacious bay window, with a southern aspect. The flower garden was abundantly stocked with rose bushes, sweet peas, mignonette, and sweet briar, and jasmine climbing up the outer walls of the room, and was bounded by a sunk fence, beyond which expanded a spacious meadow encircled round by a shrubbery; and the meadow was inhabited by six cows and a Spanish jackass, a hand higher than any individual of the asinine race throughout the whole county. At the distance of half a mile was seen the upper half of the steeple of Rooksnest church. There was but one dog on the premises,—a coach dog, kept in the stables as a playmate for the horses,—who never ventured into the house. My uncle had had this dog six years, and didn't even know his name, or ever concerned himself about the animal, except once when it had the distemper, when he ordered the coachman to light a fire in

the harness-room, and keep it there on clean straw as long as the poor invalid's nose was running, and to give it a dose of castor-oil. He entertained his own peculiar ideas upon the subject of dogs, as well as on that of men and things, saying that pet dogs were a nuisance as well as spoiled children; and he once reproved a lady in the village, because her poodle, feeling the loss of his dear mistress, who was absent from him one Sunday at church, tracked her thither by his nose, entered the church and began sniffing at all the pew-doors till he found her, and began scratching at her pew-door. I believe he had rather conceived a prejudice against dogs, in consequence of having stumbled one night, though he had not forgotten his lantern, in the streets of Constantinople, over one of those wild dogs that laid there asleep, and broken one of his shins on the rugged pavement; and likewise by having been kept awake two or three other nights by their howlings.

CHAP. XXXII.

I determine on the Army for my Profession. — We visit Cheltenham this Summer. — Some of the Company at the Boarding-house there, where we lived. — A real good-tempered Traveller, of the John Bull School.

I HAD now quitted school, and having chosen the army as my profession, and my aunt Maria strongly recommending the Guards, because they were all gentlemen and men of fashion, and my uncle agreeing with her, and thinking men of fashion had shown that they were endowed with as much gallantry and spirit as the officers of any corps in the British army, I was now waiting for the vacant commission in the Coldstream. This summer we all went to Cheltenham, to cure my aunt Maria of what she didn't know was the matter with her. We put up at the head hotel for a couple of days (there are few inns in which your custom is desired longer, for inns are only meant for a night

or two's lodging); and my uncle, finding no one he knew at Cheltenham, removed to the principal boarding-house, which, in the last visit I paid to Cheltenham, by reason of the number of new buildings that had sprung up in the outskirts of the town, was now an untenanted house, with the windows broken.

We had a pretty large party there, of about thirty persons, who contrived to kill a good part of the enemy, as the idle call it, at breakfast, lunch, dinner, tea, and supper. In such a caravan of society, there was some variety of character, of course; nay, had there been 10,000 persons in it, I do conjecture that had you been able to scrutinise into the inner man, a difference might have been found more or less in every individual, just as, according to Paley, out of 10,000 pairs of eyes there is not one pair exactly alike to another pair.

As I am not gifted, however, with microscopic eyes, to detect the minute shades of character, I find but few persons out of this society to particularise, the great majority seeming to be cast in the self-same mould.

I begin with rather an elderly lady, who was regarded with the most consideration of any of the party, a popular authoress, that had put her talents to good account in several three-volume novels, pretty strongly acidulated with remarks on that sort of society in which she had lived, viz. the middle, or rather the middling classes, whose manners, and tastes, and habits, she had exhibited with a kindred feeling of her own, in a very true and off-hand sort of style. I certainly did not particularly observe, that in her praiseworthy efforts to ridicule others out of vulgarity, she had commenced with herself; but let her pass.

Sir Charles Crow was a K.B.C., an Irishman, who had risen from a low rank of life, and was considered to be a good officer. Whatever his merits and his manners might have been considered at the Horse Guards, as one of the present company, he appeared to be a shrewd, tart little fellow, from whom it was just odd or even what kind of an answer you might receive, according to the humour he chanced to be in. I heard a lady once stop her carriage, and

halloo out of the window to him, "How's your gout to-day, Sir Charles?" but noting the effect of this kind inquiry on Sir Charles's countenance, she pulled up the window directly, and told the coachman to drive on. It is said, that dining one day with a Royal Duke, who was notorious for blurting out thoughtlessly very rude things, he took this very quietly, however:—"Why, Sir Charles, they say your mother was a squaw, and that you were born in a wigwam!"

Sir Charles was old soldier enough to curb his waspish humour to all who would give him a dinner. For what object anybody could invite him (certainly not out of charity, for he could well afford to give a dinner out of his own pocket), I cannot divine, except for the announcement that a knight was coming up stairs; for he was quite uneducated. He could certainly count, however, accurately enough his ten fingers, and could write his own name.

There was a perfect specimen, too, at the boarding-house of a watering-place queen, with abundance of wealth to keep up her royal state

on the sea-coast ; but as the scions of this dynasty are pretty well obsolete, *non ragiam di loro, — ma passa a guarda.*

There was an old Sir Something Peacock, a vain, ostentatious, silly bird indeed ; and there were three or four old fribbles, who used to dance at the balls. My aunt declared that one of them looked as if he was trying to shake off his shoes all the time he was quadrilling, and another like a leg of mutton flying out of a dish. Among the whole of the party, there was but one who afforded the least amusement to my uncle. This was a droll, unaffected, and good-tempered man, a true John Bull, who had travelled a little one summer on the continent, and was always complaining in a humorous way of the uncivil manner in which he had been imposed on.

“When I was at that beastly town of Cologne, Mr. Easy, the landlord of my inn, because I wouldn't buy a packet of eau de Cologne of him, absolutely ordered the chambermaid to leave her stinking slop-pail in the morning right in front of my

door. As to those Germans, my dear Sir, their beds are so short and so narrow, that if I turned on my side, I was sure to tumble out on the floor, and then my neighbour in the next room kept hawking and spitting with his pipe till he snored himself to sleep: then, Sir, I was obliged to dine at one o'clock on black puddings and sausages, with vinegar, which they call wine, to wash them down. Well, Sir, I'm no linguist, but though I didn't know above two or three French words, I could always make myself understood with the French, by a particular nod of the head and the use of my fingers; and they treated me very civilly too, because I always put a good-natured face on the matter, whatever it was; and used to laugh with them whenever they laughed at my blunders; and I don't believe they cheated me much after all: but as to those Germans, they either would or could not understand me; they were very unpolite to me, and I'm sure imposed upon me a good deal more. Lord, Sir, did you ever see such a parcel of rubbish as their money? I went to change a

50*l.* bill of exchange, at the banker's at Baden-baden, and I'll give you my honour, I was obliged to hire a porter to bring the sack of trumpery coins he gave me home; and such coins they were! One was a twopenny piece in some kind of base silver; another passed for $2\frac{1}{2}d.$, another for $5\frac{3}{4}d.$; and how could I calculate with these how to pay my bill at the hotel? I used to let the landlord put his hands into the sack and help himself."

My uncle seldom laughed outright, but the seriousness and simplicity with which the gentleman in question related his travelling grievances set him off several times; and when he left Cheltenham, my uncle left it too, for he was the only lively and natural character he could meet with in this watering-place, as it then was, of second-rate fashionables, chiefly resorted to by bilious East Indians, and by some really very pleasant Irish families.

CHAP. XXXIII.

A Month at Harrogate, whence we return all unmarried.

My aunt not having yet recovered from the depressing effect of the Rooksnest air (in which she had never felt those twitches of rheumatism that she enjoyed during the fortnight she was at Cheltenham), now lugged me and my uncle from thence all the way to Harrogate. The salt springs of the one had disagreed with her, and she now advised herself to try the sulphureous waters of the latter. On reaching that place, we put up at the "Green Dragon," one of the three large boarding-houses there; and nobody then sojourned at Harrogate except at a boarding-house. We arrived there towards the beginning of the close of the season, but there were still seventy guests at the public table, and a pretty clatter there was, with knives and forks and servants changing plates,

during the hour and three quarters devoted to dinner. After the first stunning effects of this noise, however, had become familiar to the ear, it was a very cheerful and enjoyable scene, to see such a motley crowd of English, Scotch, Irish, and Welsh,— for there were no foreigners at that time,— all fraternising together, without the restraints and stupid formalities of what is called good society; and almost all in good humour and at perfect freedom, and well dressed, with a proper respect to each other. The table presented an epitome of the world on a more enlarged scale than that at a Cheltenham boarding-house, and was more consecrated to the serious business of matrimonial alliances, than to mere empty and profitless flirtations. Those who resorted here for real ills of the body, such as scorbutic affections, gout, and rheumatism, came to drink the waters; others to find out a rich or gentle partner for life; a matter, of course, of some speculation; as much as every other affair in life, quite as much so at a *table d'hôte* at Harrogate as in a London ball-room. As it was now towards the close of the

season, the business became more urgent and pressing daily. Every morning at breakfast, there was talked over some acceptance or refusal at the last night's ball, for at one of the three boarding-houses there was a ball every night, except on Sunday nights, where on the continent there is sure to be a very crowded one to a certainty. Several gentlemen from Ireland, after ascertaining that I was not the heir of my uncle's estate, made overtures to my aunt Maria; but who, in spite of their experienced practice in their profession as fortune hunters, and a very fair share of modest assurance, got such contemptuous rebuffs as speedily sent them off to some other speculation. One of these gentlemen succeeded in obtaining a rich widow, and was sometime after clapped into jail for her debts.

How the other alliances terminated I know not, but they seemed very comical ones; some of them on the score of age, personal attractions, and manners, though possibly they might have turned out to be the most happy ones in the sequel. Of the advances made by

middle-aged ladies to my uncle, as of my own little flirtations, I shall say nothing, but just mention a little incident that occurred at a card-table, nightly frequented by half a dozen card-playing ladies, at the game of—— I forget at this moment its name. However, Pam, which is I believe the knave of clubs, sweeps off the pool. Some wag in the "Green Dragon," who had designedly put this important card under the table, standing by on purpose, cried out suddenly, "There's somebody has dropped a card," and picking it up, said, "Who has dropped Pam?" "I, I, I, I, I, I," answered all the six ladies together before the words had well nigh got out of his mouth.

My aunt, fastidious as she was in her ideas about gentility, found one man at the "Green Dragon" quite to her taste. She considered him to be really a man of fashion, whose manners showed at a glance that he had lived in the best society. Fortunately for her, this was a married man. When it was whispered in her ear that he was a noted swindler, she coolly replied, that his morals were one thing,

and his manners another : he was at all events free from the sin of vulgarity.

My uncle thought, upon the whole, that Harrogate was a most agreeable, animated place, and I believe that he would have further prolonged his sojourn there had it not been for his now having reached the rank of president of the table by seniority ; but as the duty of the chair entailed upon him the onerous office of carving, and he had on the first day of office lost his dinner by helping seventy people to a haunch of venison, he made a precipitate retreat the following morning. He had in vain remonstrated with the landlord on the barbarous custom of making his senior guest head carver. Why didn't the landlord carve the joints himself at a side table ? he had dined the other day at Lord Harewood's ;—his venison was carved at a side table by the butler. Besides, couldn't he carve a joint more creditably and more economically himself than one of his company, who had not only to help others to their dinner but to help himself ? He thought

it very unjust towards his guests that they should be charged with this labour. The landlord, of course, not caring a fig for my uncle, maintained that this was the custom, and that gentlefolks such as frequented the "Green Dragon," did not like to be helped from a side table—to which my uncle, who had learnt in Spain to treat inn-keepers very cavalierly, who in that country indemnify themselves for the manner in which they are treated by charging so much "*por el ruido della casa,*" viz. for the row kicked up in the house—gave it him roundly, and bade him pay less attention to his Doncaster betting-book, and more to his guests. It was not like him, it was discreditable to him, to speak in such a manner to a person in such a situation, who had never forfeited the good opinion of the thousands of people who had frequented his hotel, and who, and not the landlord, had established the custom of which my uncle complained;—and then to tax him with minding his betting-books more than his customers,

without having ever heard that the person he so taxed was at all given to that sort of gambling, to which Yorkshiremen were then more prone than the people of other counties!" Depend upon it, that his looking so crest-fallen for a day or two after, arose from reflecting on what he now felt himself ashamed of.

CHAP. XXXIV.

My Uncle begins a Conversation with the Curate rather sentimentally, and concludes it with Church Matters. — Argumentative Combat between the Squire and the Curate. — The Bishop's Visitation. — My Uncle speaks of him leniently, but of another Bishop tooth and nail.

“Ah, Allworth!” said my uncle, after he had warmly shaken him by the hand, as he paid the worthy young curate a visit the day after our return to Rooksnest; “after the month of racket I have passed at Harrogate, though I liked the racket for the time, I feel now quite refreshed by the quiet and comfort of home.”

“Now, I think a good racketing occasionally, my dear Sir, does us no harm.”

“No more it does, no more it does, Allworth, for a month; but then one begins to be sick and weary of it, at least at my years.”

“Well, certainly so, if it be merely the racket of pleasure-hunting.”

“That’s just what I mean, my dear Sir; as Boileau well says:—

‘À trente ans tu diras des plaisirs détrompé,
L’homme le plus heureux c’est l’homme le plus occupée.’

And Juvenal says:—

‘Semitæ certæ
Tranquillæ per virtutem patet unica vitæ.’

And Horace, that happiness resides within us, even at Ulubræ, if we possess a contented mind. But as to that ricketing life of mere pleasure and dissipation, it does a man no good, Allworth, to look back on.”

“But those, Mr. Easy, are ricketing days, and glorious ones, of Lord Wellington in Spain, of service to his country, on which he may look back with pride, although I believe he is far above all pride or vanity, which belong not to a man of his noble simplicity of character.”

“Truly,” said my uncle, “his journey through Spain is a more glorious one than mine was.”

Mr. Allworth, with all his friendly feeling towards him, felt himself obliged to agree in this.

“And what another life,” continued my uncle, “has this illustrious man led, to that of a man of pleasure about town, or myself!”

“But the business of life should never be over,” said the curate. “Cato, you know, began to learn Greek at the age of seventy.”

“I am but sixty-five,” said my uncle; “I hope to learn something better yet; not merely to talk better, Allworth, for talking is but idle work; but to think better, and to do better, and to be of more use in my generation than I have been hitherto. You, my young friend, may look back to the recollection of a well-spent life in your thirtieth year; who have not merely given all the alms within your power to your poorer fellow-creatures, but have visited, and comforted, and instructed them; and this is charity indeed. Would that there were many more such as yourself, in your profession, Allworth; a parson had not then been a word of mockery.”

“The word parson, Mr. Easy, means the

person who represents the Church, *persona ecclesiae*, and it is only the ignorance of those who use it that has given it a disrespectful sense. Your favourable opinion of myself affords me great satisfaction; but pray, my dear Sir, don't run away with the idea, that were I entitled to the full merit which you have been pleased to assign to me, I am an exception to the order to which I, among the many hundred labourers in the vineyard, belong. Of how few can their humble labours and humble names have reached the public ear; while the fame, or rather the infamy, of those who have scandalised their profession has been bruited abroad, and the most loudly, perhaps, by those who never enter a church from any motive of religion, if they do so at all! When the Church of England is cried down universally by men of irreproachable lives, its doom is fixed; but that is not the case yet, and I trust with confidence that it never will be. We are not afraid, dear Sir, of the Tom Paines, and other such buffoonish blasphemers, nor of the Gibbons and Voltaires."

“They have attacked the cause of Christianity itself,” replied my uncle, “but really I think that your order has something to fear from those who attack the vices of some of its members.”

“Certainly it has, if those attacks do not operate as a warning to the body of the clergy, of the peril of offending public opinion; but I hope the black sheep are as yet too exceptional to blacken the whole order of 20,000 of the clergy. But I am not so prejudiced to the profession of which I am a member, as to consider that a man in holy orders is therefore holy. We are men, subject to the same imperfections and infirmities as the laity. By far the majority of us enter our profession as a livelihood; possibly the majority may not be better qualified for it than the majority of those who enter the army, the navy, or the law for their profession.”

“But the bishop,” said my uncle, “is to lay his hands suddenly on no man.”

The good curate, at the moment, seemed a little staggered, but soon recovered himself.

“The bishop cannot penetrate into a man’s heart, Mr. Easy, more deeply than can you or myself; he accepts the candidate’s testimonials as a guarantee of his fitness for his profession.”

“He ought to inquire a little further,” said my uncle, “and inquire minutely into the lives and personal characters of the candidates who present themselves to him.”

Now the curate had some touches of humour about him, and might be said, but in a different sense to Hudibras, to have indeed much wit,

“Though he was very shy of using it,”

and replied, “I was dining with a friend of mine, at a much frequented coffee-house in London, on a very hot day, when my friend said to the waiter, ‘Sirrah, why didn’t you ice my beer?’ ‘I should have a pretty job of it,’ said he, ‘to ice everybody’s beer who comes here.’ I think, dear Sir, so would a bishop, to inquire into the lives and personal characters of all the candidates who presented themselves to him.”

My uncle was now staggered in his turn; but struck down as he was at this unexpected retort from Mr. Allworth, he rose again, refreshed like the giant Antæus, when prostrated by Hercules on his mother earth; "Ay, a bishop has enough to do without that, indeed, in studying how he may turn to the best account the revenue of his see, and attending debates in the House of Lords. And to the first of these troublesome occupations, he is driven, perhaps, by Mrs. Bishop, and Master Bishop, and Miss Bishop, that they may not be left unprovided for at his decease."

"Well, Sir, if the state thus burthens him, is it his fault?"

"No, the bishops are greatly to be pitied on this account. I dare say if the bishops, the most overcharged with revenue, were disburthened of some thousands, they would not grudge any share of this superfluity that might be divided among the poorer clergy. Nevertheless, I would not undertake to answer for them all."

Neither, I believe, would have Mr. Allworth, who thanked, however, my uncle for the good opinion he entertained of the bishops in general, as to their disinterestedness. My uncle did not accept these thanks quite so cordially as if he felt that he deserved them, it being evident that he was always inclined to speak in a caustic vein of bishops, and in fact, I believe, he was somewhat of a Presbyterian at heart.

Some few days after this conversation, the bishop of the diocese made his annual visitation, and took his luncheon at the rector's. I had for the first time the opportunity of seeing a right reverend prelate in society; and I rejoice to say that the impression that this right reverend made upon me was a very agreeable one. The present bishop was quite the gentleman, a matter of no second-rate importance in any liberal profession; a man of easy politeness and affability, without being too familiar for his position, and extremely sociable with all in company with him, without any air of superiority; being quite a man of the world, with the tact

of making himself agreeable in society. The doctor's and my aunt Tabitha's behaviour towards him would have been just the thing had the bishop affected the airs of a high priest; but it seemed to me that he greatly preferred the off-hand rattling way of that honest old soul Margery, who always made herself at ease wherever she was, and whose good-humoured talkativeness never offended any but the vulgarly proud. The bishop treated his clergy both with courtesy and hospitality, and the censorious could only allege against him that he was a shrewd man in matters of business, but could not lay to his charge any of those scandalous jobberies, bargainings, and intrigues, which several dignitaries of the Church have latterly been concerned in. They may reflect that they have served, not God, but Mammon. *He* was not much talked about, and the world agreed that he was a very respectable man in his situation.

My uncle thought him a man of the world, and that was all he said of him; little more did he say of the bishop of another diocese,

who was not only talked about, but whose character is exhibited in a well-known review, that he was the worst enemy the Church ever had, and had more injured the cause of religion among the masses of the people than a hundred Tom Paines.

CHAP. XXXV.

Mr. Piecrust, M.P. for Shrewsbury, and how he bears his Elevation. — The stirring Scenes in London at the Peace. — Sudden Wind-up of this Biography.

THERE had now become a vacancy for the representation of Shrewsbury, and that active minded man, Mr. Piecrust, finding that the duties of a deputy lord-lieutenant of the county were scarce sufficient to employ his leisure, started as a candidate for that honour, in the character of champion of the Protestant Church, in opposition to the liberal gentleman, the advocate of Catholic emancipation, whom my uncle, as I have related in a former chapter, had pooh-poohed down in conversation. The former kept open house at the "Black Swan," the latter at the "Raven." On the day of nomination the two rival orators thundered forth their eloquence to the multitude. Their arguments being even then stale scraps

out of debates, and not worth repeating; so far there was nothing to choose between them; but in manner and delivery Mr. Piecrust was the better man of the two, whose lungs were powerful, and who flourished about his short arms with the most energetic activity. In personal appearance, too, he had the advantage over his opponent, with his ruddy cheeks, and with his well-fed frame. His rival was short, meagre, and altogether a mean looking little fellow; he did not, in short, look like a Briton; he was a little asthmatic, and was not very liberal in opening his beer cellars.

While Mr. Piecrust spouted forth with unbroken fluency, not pausing a moment to trouble himself about the grammar of a sentence, and levelling now and then one of his Old Bailey jokes against his rival, the other gravely doled out his speech, like a school-boy on a speech day. The show of hands was in favour of the great Protestant champion; but a poll was demanded. During the contest ensued riots; and my uncle, putting himself at the head of a force of constables, got his head

broken in defending the defender of the faith: the issue of which was the return of the Catholic emancipator: but the sitting member was afterwards declared not duly elected, in consequence of bribery and corruption, and Mr. Piecrust became M. P. for Shrewsbury. The gainers by this contested election were the two inns. The House of Commons only gained another lawyer, and Mr. Piecrust the satisfaction of franking letters; and indeed you could not do him a greater favour than to bring him a letter for this purpose. But the lawyer gained what he wanted, a position in society.

It is so rare a thing to meet with a person who has obtained any elevation, of which he is not strictly deserving, preserve the same character in his new position unaltered, that it is to be noted greatly to Mr. Piecrust's honour, that the new M. P. made no change in his manners. In fact, what little there might be, was for the better; for feeling that he had now a claim to some consideration, he disregarded any little slight that was offered him. The defeated liberal, on the contrary, who, without the

lawyer's knowledge of the world, was no more than an ignorant stupid country squire, would almost to a certainty have assumed a still more vulgar degree of self-importance, and did so, indeed, under the smart of his disappointment, compensating himself for the loss of dignity, by making himself the more ridiculously contemptible.

I had also now gained my position in society as an ensign in the Coldstream in which were so many of much higher pretensions than myself.

The year I now speak of was distinguished by spectacles of a far more stirring interest to public sight-seers than have ever occurred since. Such was that at the Opera-house, at that time filled with all the most distinguished people of London, when the Duke of Wellington was descried in one of the first tiers of boxes, on his first return home after his glorious campaigns. It was some time before the enthusiastic applause of the audience drew him from the back of the box, where he sat retired with that modesty which distinguishes the

truly great, to advance to the front and acknowledge it. At the conclusion of the evening, as he passed through the lobby to his carriage, I well remember the gauntlet he ran between the lines on each side, which opened a passage, and cheered him all the way during his exit. That too presented another animating spectacle, when the people took off the horses from the veteran Blucher's carriage, at the top of St. James's Street, and wheeled it in triumph into the courtyard of the palace; and when in the hall of Trinity College, Cambridge, the silver goblet brimful of audit ale was presented to him, and when his speech was interpreted by Lord Stuart, in which he said, that the English were the most generous of people, for they welcomed as heartily the soldiers of another nation, as they did their own heroes.

Then it was that the royal sovereigns, the Emperors of Russia and Austria and the King of Prussia, came together to pay the tribute of respect to England, and were to be seen daily during their visit in the streets of London,

followed by shouting crowds. The Emperor of Russia was a stout tall man, with red hair, an open ruddy countenance, and blue eyes, not remarkable for any thing in his person betokening his high rank ; the Emperor of Austria looked like one who had fasted and mortified himself, had melancholy pinched-up features ; the King of Prussia had a grave aspect, and looked quite like a respectable gentleman. During their stay, there was an illumination, and a display of fireworks for the Peace, that concluded that quarter of a century of continual war. The fireworks were not to be compared with those which celebrated the Crimean peace ; but an accident occurred that occasioned a most singular bonfire, by the conflagration of the wooden Chinese bridge which had been thrown over the sheet of water in St. James's Park.

England was then what Rome was after the last Punic war. The Romans destroyed Carthage, while England saved Paris from destruction. How would the Romans have treated the dreaded Hannibal, had he fallen into their hands ?

“ There is but a step from the sublime to the ridiculous,” Napoleon exclaimed to the Abbé Pradt when he reached Warsaw in his miserable equipage, from Moscow. This downward step I descend to myself. How shall I be treated? Well, I am not the only person who talks about my uncle. In my last visit to Rooksnest, on passing through the churchyard, I heard a poor man say to his companion, “ Here lies the good old squire ; mayhap we shan’t live to see a better ! ”

THE END.



